

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

---

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to provide responsive, professional, and caring law enforcement services to all the people of Merced County. We will respond to calls for service promptly, protect lives and property to the very best of our abilities, initiate and maintain crime prevention programs, and apprehend criminal offenders.

We will maintain correctional facilities and operate correctional programs in the most efficient and effective manner possible. We will be diligent in our role as Coroners to protect the rights and dignity of those who can no longer speak for themselves.

As Merced County Sheriff/Coroner employees, we will always conform to the high standards expected by the public, by being fair, compassionate, unbiased, and in conformance with the "Law Enforcement Code of Ethics."

Sheriff-Coroner Vernon H. Warnke

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

---

## **LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS**

As a law enforcement officer, my fundamental duty is to serve the community; to safeguard lives and property; to protect the innocent against deception, the weak against oppression or intimidation and the peaceful against violence or disorder; and to respect the constitutional rights of all to liberty, equality and justice.

I will keep my private life unsullied as an example to all and will behave in a manner that does not bring discredit to me or to my agency. I will maintain courageous calm in the face of danger, scorn or ridicule; develop self-restraint; and be constantly mindful of the welfare of others. Honest in thought and deed both in my personal and official life, I will be exemplary in obeying the law and the regulations of my department. Whatever I see or hear of a confidential nature or that is confided to me in my official capacity will be kept ever secret unless revelation is necessary in the performance of my duty.

I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, political beliefs, aspirations, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions. With no compromise for crime and with relentless prosecution of criminals, I will enforce the law courteously and appropriately without fear or favor, malice or ill will, never employing unnecessary force or violence and never accepting gratuities.

I recognize the badge of my office as a symbol of public faith, and I accept it as a public trust to be held so long as I am true to the ethics of law enforcement service. I will never engage in acts of corruption or bribery, nor will I condone such acts by other peace officers. I will cooperate with all legally authorized agencies and their representatives in the pursuit of justice.

I know that I alone am responsible for my own standard of professional performance and will take every reasonable opportunity to enhance and improve my level of knowledge and competence.

I will constantly strive to achieve these objectives and ideals, dedicating myself before the people to my chosen profession . . . law enforcement.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Table of Contents

<b>MISSION STATEMENT . . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>LAW ENFORCEMENT CODE OF ETHICS . . . . .</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Chapter 1 - Law Enforcement Role and Authority . . . . .</b>	<b>8</b>
100 - Law Enforcement Authority . . . . .	9
102 - Chief Executive Officer . . . . .	12
104 - Oath of Office . . . . .	13
106 - Policy Manual . . . . .	14
<b>Chapter 2 - Organization and Administration . . . . .</b>	<b>19</b>
200 - Organizational Structure and Responsibility . . . . .	20
204 - Departmental Directive . . . . .	22
206 - Emergency Management Plan . . . . .	23
208 - Training Policy . . . . .	24
212 - Electronic Mail . . . . .	26
214 - Administrative Communications . . . . .	28
216 - Staffing Levels . . . . .	29
218 - License to Carry a Firearm . . . . .	30
220 - Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements . . . . .	39
<b>Chapter 3 - General Operations . . . . .</b>	<b>45</b>
300 - Use of Force . . . . .	46
302 - Deadly Force Review . . . . .	54
306 - Handcuffing and Restraints . . . . .	56
308 - Control Devices and Techniques . . . . .	61
309 - Electronic Control Device ("TASER") Guidelines . . . . .	66
310 - Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths . . . . .	69
312 - Firearms . . . . .	76
314 - Vehicle Pursuits . . . . .	91
316 - Deputy Response to Calls . . . . .	104
317 - Strip Search Policy . . . . .	107
318 - Canines . . . . .	110
320 - Domestic Violence . . . . .	120
322 - Search and Seizure . . . . .	129
324 - Temporary Custody of Juveniles . . . . .	131
326 - Adult Abuse . . . . .	142
328 - Discriminatory Harassment . . . . .	149
330 - Child Abuse . . . . .	154
332 - Missing Persons . . . . .	162
334 - Public Alerts . . . . .	169
336 - Victim and Witness Assistance . . . . .	174
338 - Hate Crimes . . . . .	177
340 - Standards of Conduct . . . . .	181

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

342 - Information Technology Use . . . . .	188
344 - Report Preparation . . . . .	192
346 - Media Relations . . . . .	197
348 - Court and Public Appearances, Subpoenas And Attire Standards . . . . .	200
350 - Reserve Deputies . . . . .	205
352 - Outside Agency Assistance . . . . .	210
356 - Registered Offender Information . . . . .	212
358 - Major Incident Notification . . . . .	215
360 - Death Investigation . . . . .	217
362 - Identity Theft . . . . .	220
364 - Private Persons Arrests . . . . .	222
365 - Willful Disobedience of a Court Order . . . . .	224
366 - Anti-Reproductive Rights Crimes Reporting . . . . .	226
368 - Limited English Proficiency Services . . . . .	228
370 - Communications with Persons with Disabilities . . . . .	236
372 - Mandatory Employer Notification . . . . .	244
376 - Chaplains . . . . .	245
377 - Sheriff's Security Attendants . . . . .	250
378 - Public Safety Video Surveillance System . . . . .	251
380 - Child and Dependent Adult Safety . . . . .	255
382 - Service Animals . . . . .	259
384 - Volunteer Program . . . . .	262
385 - TRAINING . . . . .	268
386 - Off-Duty Law Enforcement Actions . . . . .	269
389 - [Department/Office] Use of Social Media . . . . .	271
390 - Gun Violence Restraining Orders . . . . .	274
391 - Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation . . . . .	277
<b>Chapter 4 - Patrol Operations . . . . .</b>	<b>279</b>
400 - Patrol Function . . . . .	280
402 - Bias-Based Policing . . . . .	284
404 - Briefing Training . . . . .	287
406 - Crime and Disaster Scene Integrity . . . . .	288
407 - Tactical Support Unit (TSU) . . . . .	290
408 - SWAT . . . . .	291
409 - Dive Team . . . . .	295
410 - Ride-Along Policy . . . . .	301
411 - Aviation Unit . . . . .	304
412 - Hazardous Material Response . . . . .	306
414 - Hostage and Barricade Incidents . . . . .	309
416 - Response to Bomb Calls . . . . .	314
418 - Mental Illness Commitments . . . . .	319
420 - Cite and Release Policy . . . . .	325
421 - Out of State and County Arrest Extradition Waiver . . . . .	329
422 - Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Representatives . . . . .	330
424 - Rapid Response and Deployment . . . . .	334
428 - Immigration Violations . . . . .	337

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

---

432 - Patrol Rifles . . . . .	342
434 - Aircraft Accidents . . . . .	346
436 - Field Training Officer Program . . . . .	350
438 - Obtaining Aircraft Support . . . . .	353
440 - Detentions And Photographing Detainees . . . . .	355
442 - Criminal Organizations . . . . .	361
444 - Supervisor Availability . . . . .	366
446 - Mobile Audio/Video . . . . .	367
448 - Mobile Data Computer Use . . . . .	374
450 - Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras . . . . .	377
452 - Marijuana / Cannabis . . . . .	385
453 - CIVIL STANDBY . . . . .	391
454 - Bicycle Patrol Unit . . . . .	392
458 - Foot Pursuits . . . . .	395
459 - School Resource Deputies . . . . .	400
461 - Search/Arrest Warrant Threat Matrix . . . . .	401
462 - Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) . . . . .	402
463 - Planned Enforcement Details . . . . .	405
464 - Homeless Persons . . . . .	406
465 - Crisis Intervention Incidents . . . . .	409
466 - Public Recording of Law Enforcement Activity . . . . .	414
467 - First Amendment Assemblies . . . . .	417
468 - Civil Disputes . . . . .	423
469 - Suspicious Activity Reporting . . . . .	426
470 - Medical Aid and Response . . . . .	428
 <b>Chapter 5 - Traffic Operations . . . . .</b>	 <b>434</b>
500 - Traffic Function and Responsibility . . . . .	435
502 - Traffic Collision Reporting . . . . .	438
510 - Vehicle Towing and Release . . . . .	441
512 - Vehicle Impound Hearings . . . . .	446
516 - Traffic Citations . . . . .	448
520 - Disabled Vehicles . . . . .	451
524 - 72-Hour Parking Violations . . . . .	452
 <b>Chapter 6 - Investigation Operations . . . . .</b>	 <b>454</b>
600 - Investigation and Prosecution . . . . .	455
602 - Sexual Assault Investigations . . . . .	461
606 - Asset Forfeiture . . . . .	466
608 - Informants . . . . .	473
610 - Eyewitness Identification . . . . .	480
613 - Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Operations . . . . .	484
614 - Warrant Service . . . . .	487
615 - Operations Planning and Deconfliction . . . . .	491
 <b>Chapter 7 - Equipment . . . . .</b>	 <b>497</b>
700 - Department Owned and Personal Property . . . . .	498

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

701 - Weapons Retained for Official use . . . . .	500
702 - Personal Communication Devices . . . . .	501
704 - Vehicle Maintenance . . . . .	506
706 - Vehicle Use . . . . .	508
707 - SECURING DEPARTMENTAL PROPERTY IN VEHICLES . . . . .	514
708 - Cash Handling, Security and Management . . . . .	515
709 - Personal Protective Equipment . . . . .	517
 <b>Chapter 8 - Support Services . . . . .</b>	 <b>522</b>
800 - Dispatch Operations . . . . .	523
802 - Property and Evidence . . . . .	530
804 - Records Division . . . . .	541
806 - Restoration of Firearm Serial Numbers . . . . .	543
808 - Records Maintenance and Release . . . . .	545
810 - Protected Information . . . . .	553
812 - Computers and Digital Evidence . . . . .	558
818 - Animal Control . . . . .	562
 <b>Chapter 10 - Personnel . . . . .</b>	 <b>566</b>
1000 - Recruitment and Selection . . . . .	567
1002 - Evaluation of Employees . . . . .	572
1004 - Promotional and Transfer Policy . . . . .	576
1006 - Grievance Procedure . . . . .	579
1010 - Reporting of Employee Convictions . . . . .	583
1012 - Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace . . . . .	585
1013 - REPORTING OFF-DUTY CONTACT WITH OUTSIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES . . . . .	588
1014 - Sick Leave . . . . .	589
1015 - Employee Personal Contact Information . . . . .	591
1016 - Communicable Diseases . . . . .	592
1018 - Smoking and Tobacco Use . . . . .	597
1020 - Personnel Complaints . . . . .	598
1022 - Seat Belts . . . . .	608
1024 - Body Armor . . . . .	610
1026 - Personnel Records . . . . .	612
1028 - Request for Change of Assignment . . . . .	619
1030 - Employee Commendations . . . . .	620
1032 - Fitness for Duty . . . . .	623
1034 - Meal Periods and Breaks . . . . .	626
1035 - Lactation Break Policy . . . . .	627
1036 - Time Card Procedures . . . . .	629
1038 - Overtime Compensation Requests . . . . .	630
1040 - Outside Employment . . . . .	632
1041 - OUTSIDE VOLUNTEERISM/MEMBERSHIP . . . . .	637
1042 - Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury Reporting . . . . .	638
1044 - Personal Appearance Standards . . . . .	640
1046 - Uniform Regulations . . . . .	643

Merced County Sheriff's Office  
Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

---

1050 - Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships . . . . . 654  
1052 - Department Badges . . . . . 657  
1054 - Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments . . . . . 659  
1058 - Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking . . . . . 664  
1059 - Anti-Retaliation . . . . . 668  
1060 - Illness and Injury Prevention . . . . . 672  
1061 - Line-of-Duty Deaths . . . . . 677

**Attachments . . . . .**

## **Chapter 1 - Law Enforcement Role and Authority**

# Law Enforcement Authority

## 100.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to affirm the authority of the members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to perform their functions based on established legal authority.

## 100.2 PEACE OFFICER POWERS

Sworn members of this [department/office] are authorized to exercise peace officer powers pursuant to applicable state law (Penal Code § 830.1 et seq.).

### 100.2.1 ARREST AUTHORITY OUTSIDE THE JURISDICTION OF THE MERCED COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The arrest authority outside the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office includes (Penal Code § 830.1; Penal Code § 836):

- (a) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person committed a felony.
- (b) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person has committed a misdemeanor in the presence of the deputy and the deputy reasonably believes there is immediate danger to person or property or of escape.
- (c) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person has committed a misdemeanor for which an arrest is authorized even if not committed in the presence of the deputy such as certain domestic violence offenses and there is immediate danger to person or property or of escape or the arrest is mandated by statute.
- (d) When authorized by a cross jurisdictional agreement with the jurisdiction in which the arrest is made.
- (e) In compliance with an arrest warrant.

On-duty arrests will not generally be made outside the jurisdiction of this [department/office] except in cases of hot or fresh pursuit, while following up on crimes committed with the County or while assisting another agency.

On-duty deputies who discover criminal activity outside the jurisdiction of the County should when circumstances permit, consider contacting the agency having primary jurisdiction before attempting an arrest.

### 100.2.2 ARREST AUTHORITY INSIDE THE JURISDICTION OF THE MERCED COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

The arrest authority within the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office includes (Penal Code § 830.1; Penal Code § 836):

- (a) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person has committed a felony, whether or not committed in the presence of the deputy.
- (b) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person has committed a misdemeanor in this jurisdiction and in the presence of the deputy.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Law Enforcement Authority*

---

- (c) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person has committed a public offense outside this jurisdiction, in the presence of the deputy and the deputy reasonably believes there is an immediate danger to person or property, or of escape.
- (d) When the deputy has probable cause to believe the person has committed a misdemeanor for which an arrest is authorized or required by statute even though the offense has not been committed in the in the presence of the deputy such as certain domestic violence offenses.
- (e) In compliance with an arrest warrant.

### 100.2.3 TIME OF MISDEMEANOR ARRESTS

Deputies shall not arrest a person for a misdemeanor between the hours of 10:00 p.m. of any day and 6:00 a.m. of the next day unless (Penal Code § 840):

- (a) The arrest is made without a warrant pursuant to Penal Code § 836 which includes:
  - 1. A misdemeanor committed in the presence of the deputy.
  - 2. Misdemeanor domestic violence offenses (See the Domestic Violence Policy).
- (b) The arrest is made in a public place.
- (c) The arrest is made with the person in custody pursuant to another lawful arrest.
- (d) The arrest is made pursuant to a warrant which, for good cause shown, directs that it may be served at any time of the day or night.

### 100.2.4 OREGON AUTHORITY

Sworn members of this [department/office] who enter the state of Oregon in order to provide or attempt to provide law enforcement assistance have Oregon peace officer authority within 50 miles from the California-Oregon border (ORS 133.405). Such authority shall only apply when deputies are acting:

- (a) In response to a request for law enforcement assistance initiated by an Oregon sheriff, constable, marshal, municipal police officer or member of the Oregon State Police.
- (b) In response to a reasonable belief that emergency law enforcement assistance is necessary to preserve life, and circumstances make it impractical for Oregon law enforcement officials to formally request assistance.
- (c) For the purpose of assisting Oregon law enforcement officials with emergency assistance in response to criminal activity, traffic accidents, emergency incidents or other similar public safety situations, regardless of whether an Oregon law enforcement official is present at the scene of the incident.

Merced County Sheriff's Office deputies have no authority to enforce Oregon traffic or motor vehicle laws.

Whenever practicable, deputies should seek permission from a [department/office] supervisor before entering Oregon to provide law enforcement services. As soon as practicable, deputies exercising law enforcement authority in Oregon shall submit any appropriate written reports

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Law Enforcement Authority*

---

concerning the incident to the Oregon agency having primary jurisdiction over the area in which the incident occurred.

#### **100.3 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to limit its members to only exercise the authority granted to them by law.

While this [department/office] recognizes the power of peace officers to make arrests and take other enforcement action, deputies are encouraged to use sound discretion in the enforcement of the law. This [department/office] does not tolerate the abuse of law enforcement authority.

#### **100.4 INTERSTATE PEACE OFFICER POWERS**

Peace officer powers may be extended to other states:

- (a) As applicable under interstate compacts, memorandums of understanding or mutual aid agreements in compliance with the laws of each state.
- (b) When a deputy enters an adjoining state in close or fresh pursuit of a person believed to have committed a felony (ARS § 13-3832; NRS 171.158; ORS 133.430).

The person arrested out of state must be taken without unnecessary delay before a magistrate of the county in which the arrest was made (ARS § 13-3833; NRS 171.158; ORS 133.440).

#### **100.5 CONSTITUTIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

All members shall observe and comply with every person's clearly established rights under the United States and California Constitutions.

# Chief Executive Officer

## 102.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) has mandated that all sworn officers and dispatchers employed within the State of California shall receive certification by POST within prescribed time periods.

### 102.1.1 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER REQUIREMENTS

Any chief executive officer of this department appointed after January 1, 1999, shall, as a condition of continued employment, complete the course of training prescribed by POST and obtain the Basic Certificate by POST within two years of appointment (Penal Code § 832.4).

### 102.1.2 SHERIFF CANDIDATE REQUIREMENTS

Prior to filing for the office of Sheriff, any candidate shall at minimum meet the requirements of Government Code § 24004.3.

## Oath of Office

### 104.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that oaths, when appropriate, are administered to department members.

### 104.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that, when appropriate, department members affirm the oath of their office as an expression of commitment to the constitutional rights of those served by the Department and the dedication of its members to their duties.

### 104.3 OATH OF OFFICE

All department members, when appropriate, shall take and subscribe to the oaths or affirmations applicable to their positions. All sworn members shall be required to affirm the oath of office expressing commitment and intent to respect constitutional rights in discharging the duties of a law enforcement officer (Cal. Const. Art. 20, § 3; Government Code § 3102). The oath shall be as follows:

"I, (employee name), do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of California; that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties upon which I am about to enter."

### 104.4 MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

The oath of office shall be filed as prescribed by law (Government Code § 3105).

---

# Policy Manual

## 106.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The manual of the Merced County Sheriff's Office is hereby established and shall be referred to as the Policy Manual or the manual. The manual is a statement of the current policies, rules and guidelines of this department. All members are to conform to the provisions of this manual.

All prior and existing manuals, orders and regulations that are in conflict with this manual are rescinded, except to the extent that portions of existing manuals, procedures, orders and other regulations that have not been included herein shall remain in effect, provided that they do not conflict with the provisions of this manual.

### 106.1.1 DISCLAIMER

The provisions contained in this Policy Manual are not intended to create an employment contract, nor any employment rights or entitlements. The policies contained within this manual are for the internal use of the Merced County Sheriff's Office Department and shall not be construed to create a higher standard or duty of care for civil or criminal liability against the County, its officials or employees. Violations of any provision of any policy contained within this manual shall only form the basis for departmental administrative action, training or discipline. The Merced County Sheriff's Office Department reserves the right to revise any policy content, in whole or in part.

## 106.2 POLICY

Except where otherwise expressly stated, the provisions of this manual shall be considered as guidelines. It is recognized that the work of law enforcement is not always predictable and circumstances may arise which warrant departure from these guidelines. It is the intent of this manual to be viewed from an objective standard, taking into consideration the sound discretion entrusted to members of this department under the circumstances reasonably available at the time of any incident.

### 106.2.1 DISCLAIMER

The provisions contained in the Policy Manual are not intended to create an employment contract nor any employment rights or entitlements. The policies contained within this manual are for the internal use of the Merced County Sheriff's Office and shall not be construed to create a higher standard or duty of care for civil or criminal liability against the County, its officials or members. Violations of any provision of any policy contained within this manual shall only form the basis for department administrative action, training or discipline. The Merced County Sheriff's Office reserves the right to revise any policy content, in whole or in part.

### 106.2.2 STAFF

Staff shall consist of the following:

- Sheriff

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Policy Manual*

---

- Undersheriff
- Division Captains
- Division Lieutenants
- Administrative Services Director

The staff shall review all recommendations regarding proposed changes to the manual.

#### 106.2.3 OTHER PERSONNEL

All Department employees suggesting revision of the contents of the Policy Manual shall forward their suggestion, in writing, to their respective supervisors who will consider the recommendation and forward to staff.

#### 106.3 AUTHORITY

The Sheriff shall be considered the ultimate authority for the content and adoption of the provisions of this manual and shall ensure compliance with all applicable federal, state and local laws. The Sheriff or the authorized designee is authorized to issue Departmental Directives, which shall modify those provisions of the manual to which they pertain. Departmental Directives shall remain in effect until such time as they may be permanently incorporated into the manual.

##### 106.3.1 ACCEPTABLE ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are acceptable substitutions in the manual:

- Departmental Directives may be abbreviated as "DD"
- Policy Manual sections may be abbreviated as "Section 106.X" or "§ 106.X"

##### 106.3.2 DISTRIBUTION OF MANUAL

Copies of the Policy Manual shall be distributed to the following:

- Sheriff
- Undersheriff
- Captains
- Lieutenants
- Administrative Services Director
- Administrative Sergeant
- All Patrol Offices
- All Correctional Facilities
- All Investigative Divisions (Dets, MAGNET, SRT, etc)

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Policy Manual*

---

A computerized version of the Policy Manual is available on the Department network for access by all employees. The computerized version will be limited to viewing and printing of specific sections. No changes shall be made to the electronic version without authorization from Staff.

### **106.4 DEFINITIONS**

The following words and terms shall have these assigned meanings throughout the Policy Manual, unless it is apparent from the content that they have a different meaning:

**Administrative Sergeant** - Sheriff Operations Sergeant over training, backgrounds, hiring, and equipment.

**Adult** - Any person 18 years of age or older.

**CCR** - California Code of Regulations (Example: 15 CCR 1151).

**CHP** - The California Highway Patrol.

**CFR** - Code of Federal Regulations.

**County** - The County of Merced County Sheriff's Department.

**Civilian** - Employees and volunteers who are not sworn peace officers.

**Department/MCSO** - The Merced County Sheriff's Office.

**DMV** - The Department of Motor Vehicles.

**Employee/personnel** - Any person employed by the Department.

**Juvenile** - Any person under the age of 18 years.

**Manual** - The Merced County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual.

**May** - Indicates a permissive, discretionary or conditional action.

**Member** - Any person employed or appointed by the Merced County Sheriff's Office, including full-time sworn deputies, reserve deputies, civilian employees, correctional officers, animal control officers, and volunteers.

**Deputy** - Those employees, regardless of rank, who are sworn peace officers of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

**On-duty** - A member's status during the period when he/she is actually engaged in the performance of his/her assigned duties.

**Order** - A written or verbal instruction issued by a superior.

**POST** - The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training.

**Rank** - The title of the classification held by a deputy.

**Shall or will** - Indicates a mandatory action.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Policy Manual*

---

**Should** - Indicates a generally required or expected action, absent a rational basis for failing to conform.

**Supervisor** - A person in a position of authority that may include the responsibility for hiring, transfer, suspension, promotion, discharge, assignment, reward or discipline of other department members, directing the work of other members or having the authority to adjust grievances. The supervisory exercise of authority may not be merely routine or clerical in nature but requires the use of independent judgment.

The term "supervisor" may also include any person (e.g., deputy-in-charge, lead or senior worker) given responsibility for the direction of the work of others without regard to a formal job title, rank or compensation.

When there is only one department member on-duty, that person may also be the supervisor, except when circumstances reasonably require the notification or involvement of the member's off-duty supervisor or an on-call supervisor.

**USC** - United States Code.

#### 106.4.1 REVISIONS TO POLICIES

All employees are responsible for keeping abreast of all Policy Manual revisions. All changes to the Policy Manual will be posted on the "X" drive in the folder named "Policy". The Sheriff or his designee will forward revisions to the Policy Manual as needed to all personnel via electronic mail.

The folder named "Policy" also contains a form for any corrections that should be made. Any corrections should be forwarded through the employees chain of command.

Captains and civilian staff managers will ensure that employees under his/her command are aware of any Policy Manual revisions.

#### 106.4.2 UNIT/FUNCTION-SPECIFIC POLICY MANUALS

Administrative and/or operational considerations may require that a particular operational unit within the department develop and maintain its own individual policies in order to effectively meet the needs of its unique functions. Such unit-specific policies are subject to same process of review and approval as "The Policy Manual" prior to becoming effective. Personnel assigned to such units are responsible for being familiar with the contents of such individual policies. Such policies shall not be in conflict with the general "Policy Manual" unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff.

Examples of specialized operational policies that may be implemented are Animal Services Division, Coroner's Division, Communications Division, etc. In the event a member does not fall under this policy, Merced County Human Resources policies and related county documents may serve as the appropriate policy/guideline when applicable.

#### 106.5 PERIODIC REVIEW OF THE POLICY MANUAL

The Sheriff will ensure that the Policy Manual is periodically reviewed and updated as necessary.

## *Policy Manual*

---

### **106.6 ISSUING THE POLICY MANUAL**

An electronic version of the Policy Manual will be made available to all members on the department network for viewing and printing. No changes shall be made to the manual without authorization from the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

Each member shall have electronic access to to review the Policy Manual and Departmental Directives. Members shall seek clarification as needed from an appropriate supervisor for any provisions that they do not fully understand.

### **106.7 REVISIONS TO POLICIES**

Members are responsible for keeping abreast of all Policy Manual revisions.

Each Division Captain will ensure that members under his/her command are aware of any Policy Manual revision.

All department members suggesting revision of the contents of the Policy Manual shall forward their written suggestions to the appropriate division Captain who will consider the recommendations and forward them to the command staff as appropriate.

Employees will be provided time during their shift to review the policy manual when appropriate based on their workload/responsibilities.

The policy manual is located on the Sheriff's Office "X" drive in the folder named "Policy".

## **Chapter 2 - Organization and Administration**

# Organizational Structure and Responsibility

## 200.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The organizational structure of this department is designed to create an efficient means to accomplish our mission and goals and to provide for the best possible service to the public.

## 200.2 DIVISIONS

The Sheriff is responsible for administering and managing the Merced County Sheriff's Office. There are two divisions in the Sheriff's Department:

- Operations Division
- Corrections Division

The Undersheriff has the final administrative and managerial authority for all functions of this department, subject to the Sheriff's discretion. Therefore, unless specifically indicated otherwise in this manual, the same authority and degree vested in the Sheriff which is referenced in this manual is vested in the Undersheriff.

### 200.2.1 OPERATIONS DIVISION

The Operations Division is commanded by the Operations Captain. The Operations Captain has the primary responsibility of providing general management direction and control for that division which are comprised of sub-divisions or units. The Operations Division consists of the Uniformed Patrol, Dispatch, Civilian Support Staff, Coroner's Division, Animal Services Division, and other special operations units.

### 200.2.2 CORRECTIONS DIVISION

The Corrections Division is commanded by the Corrections Captain. At the direction of the Captain, the Corrections Lieutenants have the primary responsibility of providing general management direction and control for that division which is comprised of sub-divisions and units. The Corrections Division consists of Uniformed Corrections Officers, Supervised Release Team and Civilian Support Staff.

## 200.3 COMMAND PROTOCOL

### 200.3.1 SUCCESSION OF COMMAND

The Sheriff exercises command over all personnel in the Department. During planned absences of the Sheriff, the Undersheriff assumes the command duties of the Sheriff. In the absence of the Undersheriff, a Division Captain may be temporarily appointed to serve as the acting Undersheriff.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Organizational Structure and Responsibility*

---

### **200.3.2 UNITY OF COMMAND**

The principles of unity of command ensure efficient supervision and control within the Department. Generally, each employee shall be accountable to one supervisor at any time for a given assignment or responsibility. Except where specifically delegated authority may exist by policy or special assignment (e.g., K-9, SWAT, Dive, SAR), any supervisor may temporarily direct any subordinate if an operational necessity exists.

### **200.3.3 ORDERS**

Members shall respond to and make a good faith and reasonable effort to comply with the lawful order of superior officers and other proper authority.

### **200.4 DETECTIVE DIVISION**

The Detective Division shall fall under the responsibility of the Undersheriff.

# Departmental Directive

## 204.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Departmental Directives establish an interdepartmental communication that may be used by the Sheriff to make immediate changes to policy and procedure consistent with the current Memorandum of Understanding and as permitted by Government Code § 3500 et seq. Departmental Directives include, but are not limited to, general orders, training memos, and legal information updates. Departmental Directives will immediately modify or change and supersede sections of this manual to which they pertain.

### 204.1.1 DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVE PROTOCOL

Departmental Directives will be incorporated into the manual as required upon approval of Staff. Departmental Directives will modify existing policies or create a new policy as appropriate and will be incorporated in this policy manual as applicable.

Any Departmental Directives issued after publication of the current Policy Manual shall be distributed to personnel via e-mail. Such directives shall be numbered consecutively starting with the last two digits of the year, followed by the number "01" For example, 12-01 signifies the first Departmental Directive for the year 2012.

Personnel are required to be familiar with all Departmental Directives.

## 204.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 204.2.1 STAFF

The staff shall review and approve revisions of the Policy Manual, which will incorporate changes originally made by a Departmental Directive.

### 204.2.2 SHERIFF

The Sheriff shall issue all Departmental Directives.

# Emergency Management Plan

## **206.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The County has prepared an Emergency Management Plan for use by all employees in the event of a major disaster or other emergency event. The plan provides for a strategic response by all employees and assigns specific responsibilities in the event that the plan is activated (Government Code § 8610).

## **206.2 ACTIVATING THE EMERGENCY PLAN**

The Emergency Management Plan can be activated on the order of the official designated by local ordinance.

### **206.2.1 RECALL OF PERSONNEL**

In the event that the Emergency Management Plan is activated, all employees of the Merced County Sheriff's Office are subject to immediate recall. Employees may also be subject to recall during extraordinary circumstances as deemed necessary by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

All employees of this department are required to ensure that their respective contact information is current per Department Policy section # 1015.1 (Employee Personal Contact Information)

Failure to promptly respond to an order to report for duty may result in discipline.

## **206.3 LOCATION OF THE PLAN**

The Emergency Management Plan is available in Administration and Communications. All supervisors should familiarize themselves with the Emergency Management Plan. Supervisors should ensure that department personnel are familiar with the roles personnel will play when the plan is implemented.

## **206.4 UPDATING OF MANUALS**

The Sheriff or designee shall review the Emergency Management Plan Manual at least once every two years to ensure that the manual conforms to any revisions made by the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS) and should appropriately address any needed revisions.

## Training Policy

### 208.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of this department to administer a training program that will provide for the professional growth and continued development of its personnel. By doing so, the Department will ensure its personnel possess the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a professional level of service that meets the needs of the community.

### 208.2 PHILOSOPHY

The Department seeks to provide ongoing training and encourages all personnel to participate in advanced training and formal education on a continual basis. Training is provided within the confines of funding, requirements of a given assignment, staffing levels, and legal mandates. Whenever practical, the Department will use courses certified by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

### 208.3 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Training Program are to:

- (a) Enhance the level of law enforcement service to the public
- (b) Increase the technical expertise and overall effectiveness of our personnel
- (c) Provide for continued professional development of department personnel

### 208.4 TRAINING PLAN

A training plan will be developed and maintained by the Training Manager. It is the responsibility of the Training Manager to maintain, review, and update the training plan on an annual basis. The plan will address the following areas:

- CA POST mandated perishable skills training
- Legal Update Training as recommended by counsel
- Specialty Training as required

### 208.5 TRAINING RECOMMENDATIONS

All department employees are encouraged to submit comments and critiques regarding the quality of any respective training that is provided.

### 208.6 TRAINING PROCEDURES

- (a) All employees assigned to attend training shall attend as scheduled unless previously excused by their immediate supervisor. Excused absences from mandatory training should be limited to the following:
  - 1. Court appearances

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Training Policy*

---

2. First choice vacation
  3. Sick leave
  4. Physical limitations preventing the employee's participation.
  5. Emergency situations
- (b) When an employee is unable to attend mandatory training, that employee shall:
1. Notify his/her supervisor as soon as possible but no later than one hour prior to the start of training.
  2. Document his/her absence in a memorandum to his/her supervisor.
  3. Make arrangements through his/her supervisor and the Training Manager to attend the required training on an alternate date.

## Electronic Mail

### 212.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper use and application of the Department's electronic mail (email) system by employees of this department. E-mail is a communication tool available to employees to enhance efficiency in the performance of job duties and is to be used in accordance with generally accepted business practices and current law (e.g., California Public Records Act). Messages transmitted over the e-mail system must only be those that involve official business activities or contain information essential to employees for the accomplishment of business-related tasks and/or communication directly related to the business, administration, or practices of the Department.

### 212.2 EMAIL RIGHT OF PRIVACY

All email messages, including any attachments, that are transmitted over department networks are considered department records and therefore are department property. The Department reserves the right to access, audit or disclose, for any lawful reason, any message including any attachment that is transmitted over its email system or that is stored on any department system.

The email system is not a confidential system since all communications transmitted on, to or from the system are the property of the Department. Therefore, the email system is not appropriate for confidential communications. If a communication must be private, an alternative method to communicate the message should be used instead of email. Employees using the Department's email system shall have no expectation of privacy concerning communications utilizing the system.

Employees should not use personal accounts to exchange email or other information that is related to the official business of the Department.

### 212.3 PROHIBITED USE OF EMAIL

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive and harassing or any other inappropriate messages on the email system is prohibited and may result in discipline.

Email messages addressed to the entire department are only to be used for official business related items that are of particular interest to all users and must be approved by the Sheriff or a Captain. Personal advertisements are not acceptable.

It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message under another user's name. Users are strongly encouraged to log off the network when their computer is unattended. This added security measure would minimize the misuse of an individual's email, name and/or password by others.

### 212.4 EMAIL RECORD MANAGEMENT

Email may, depending upon the individual content, be a public record under the California Public Records Act and must be managed in accordance with the established records retention schedule and in compliance with state law.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Electronic Mail*

---

The Custodian of Records shall ensure that email messages are retained and recoverable as outlined in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

### 212.4.1 DEPARTMENT EMAIL COMMUNICATION

In order to further department wide communication of significant events and policy in a timely manner, all employees will check their county email account at least once during their shift.

Operations employees are encouraged to check their county email more than just one time during their shift.

If you do not have access to a county computer due to your assignment, you can still check your county email by remote access via the INTERNET. Employees are to go to this address: <http://www.co.merced.ca.us/CountyWeb/>

After employees access this site, click on the "Exchange" icon. This will direct you to a sign on screen. Type in your User ID number ("SHxxxx") and then your password to access your county email.

Your user name and password are to be typed in lower case letters.

# Administrative Communications

## 214.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Administrative communications of this department are governed by the following policies.

## 214.2 MEMORANDUMS

Memorandums may be issued periodically by the Sheriff to announce and document all promotions, transfers, hiring of new personnel, separations, personnel and group commendations, other changes in status, and other official announcements.

## 214.3 CORRESPONDENCE

In order to ensure that the letterhead and name of the Department are not misused, all external correspondence shall be on Department letterhead. All Department letterhead shall bear the signature element of the Sheriff. Personnel should use Department letterhead only for official business and with approval of their supervisor.

## 214.4 SURVEYS

All surveys made in the name of the Department shall be authorized by the Sheriff or the appropriate Division Captain.

## Staffing Levels

### **216.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that proper supervision is available for all shifts. The Department intends to balance the employee's needs against the need to have flexibility and discretion in using personnel to meet operational needs. While balance is desirable, the paramount concern is the need to meet operational requirements of the Department.

### **216.2 MINIMUM STAFFING LEVELS**

Minimum staffing levels should result in the scheduling of at least one regular supervisors on duty whenever possible. At least one field supervisor will be on duty during each watch.

#### **216.2.1 SUPERVISION DEPLOYMENTS**

In order to accommodate training and other unforeseen circumstances, a deputy may be designated as a field supervisor ("Officer-in-Charge") in place of a field sergeant. The OIC must be approved by command staff prior to designation.

## License to Carry a Firearm

### 218.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Sheriff is given the statutory discretion to issue a license to carry a firearm to residents within the community (Penal Code § 26150; Penal Code § 26155). This policy will provide a written process for the application and issuance of such licenses. Pursuant to Penal Code § 26160, this policy shall be made accessible to the public.

#### 218.1.1 APPLICATION OF POLICY

Nothing in this policy shall preclude the Sheriff from entering into an agreement with any chief of police within the county to process applications and licenses for the carrying of concealed weapons within that jurisdiction.

### 218.2 QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

In order to be granted a license to carry a concealed weapon, the applicant must meet the following requirements:

- (a) Be a resident of the County of Merced or meet the criteria of section 218.4
- (b) Be at least 21 years of age.
- (c) Fully complete an application that will include substantial personal information. Much of the information in the application may be subject to public access under the Public Records Act.
- (d) Be free from criminal convictions that would disqualify the applicant from carrying a concealed weapon. Fingerprints will be required and a complete criminal background check will be conducted.
- (e) Be of good moral character.
- (f) Show good cause for the issuance of the license.
- (g) Pay all associated application fees. These fees are set by statute and may not be refunded if the application is denied.
- (h) Be free from any medical and psychological conditions that might make the applicant unsuitable for carrying a concealed weapon.
- (i) Meet the criteria hereinafter stated.

### 218.3 QUALIFIED APPLICANTS

In order to qualify for a license to carry a firearm, the applicant must meet certain requirements, including:

- (a) Be a resident of the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department (Penal Code § 26150; Penal Code § 26155).
- (b) Be at least 21 years of age (Penal Code § 29610).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

- (c) Fully complete an application that will include substantial personal information. Much of the information in the application may be subject to public access under the Public Records Act.
- (d) Be free from criminal convictions that would disqualify the applicant from carrying a firearm. Fingerprints will be required and a complete criminal background check will be conducted.
- (e) Be of good moral character (Penal Code § 26150; Penal Code § 26155).
- (f) Show good cause for the issuance of the license (Penal Code § 26150; Penal Code § 26155).
- (g) Pay all associated application fees. These fees are set by statute and may not be refunded if the application is denied.
- (h) Provide proof of ownership or registration of any firearm to be licensed.
- (i) Be free from any psychological conditions that might make the applicant unsuitable for carrying a firearm (Penal Code § 26190).
- (j) Complete required training (Penal Code § 26165).

### 218.3.1 APPLICATIONS - PHASE ONE

Phase One is to be completed by all applicants.

#### 1) APPLICATION FILING REQUIREMENTS

Any individual applying for a license to carry a concealed weapon shall first fully complete a Concealed Weapons License Application (California Department of Justice: Standard Application for License to Carry a Concealed Weapon (CCW)) to be signed under penalty of perjury. It is against the law to knowingly make any false statements on such an application. This application shall be submitted and reviewed for sufficiency by the Sheriff's CCW Coordinator. The CCW Coordinator may consult with the Sheriff's CCW Evaluator on all matters related to an application.

If an incomplete CCW Application is received, the Sheriff or CCW Evaluator may do any of the following:

- (a) Request the applicant to complete the application before any further processing.
- (b) Advance the incomplete application for conditional processing pending completion of all mandatory conditions.
- (c) Issue a denial if the materials submitted at the time demonstrate that the applicant would not qualify for a CCW Permit even if the application was completed (e.g., not a resident, disqualifying criminal conviction, absence of good cause).

The applicant shall be required to submit to Live Scan fingerprinting and a complete criminal background check by the Department of Justice (DOJ). A second set of fingerprints may be required for retention in department files. Fingerprint fees will be collected in addition to the initial application fees. No license shall be issued to any person determined to be prohibited by state or federal law from possessing, receiving, owning or purchasing a firearm.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

#### 2) INVESTIGATION

During this phase, the CCW Evaluator shall be responsible for evaluating the applicant's suitability for a CCW license. The Evaluator should be recused from this function in the event circumstances arise which might conflict with the designee's ability to make an unbiased and fair decision. In that event, the Sheriff shall appoint an alternate designee to evaluate the subject application.

The applicant may be scheduled for a personal interview with the authorized designee. During this stage, there will be further discussion of the applicant's statement of good cause and any potential restrictions or conditions that might be placed on the license.

The determination of good cause for granting a CCW license will be based on the totality of circumstances in each individual case.

Any denial for lack of good cause should be rational, articulable and not arbitrary in nature.

The Evaluator may require the applicant to provide relevant information supporting the applicant's need for a permit and/or the applicant's good moral character.

Depending on circumstances, the applicant may be required to provide written evidence from a licensed physician and/or an authorized psychologist used by the Department for psychological testing in order to determine the applicant's suitability for carrying a concealed weapon and that the applicant is not currently suffering from any medical or psychological condition that would make the individual unsuitable for carrying a concealed weapon. The costs of this psychological evaluation shall be paid by the applicant but shall not exceed the fee amount set by statute.

The psychological evaluation is intended to determine whether an applicant has any outward indications or history of psychological problems that might render him/her unfit to carry a concealed weapon. When psychological testing on the initial application is required, such testing shall be consistent with the requirements of the California Penal Code.

If it is determined that the applicant is not a suitable candidate for carrying a concealed weapon, the applicant shall be removed from further consideration. Failure to provide satisfactory evidence of medical or psychological fitness or requested relevant information shall result in removal of the applicant from further consideration. Medical requirements should only pertain to whether or not the applicant would be a danger to the applicant or others.

Once the CCW Evaluator has completed the evaluation of the application, the Evaluator shall forward a recommendation for approval or denial of a CCW license to the Sheriff who has the sole discretion to approve or deny the license.

If the Sheriff approves the application, the applicant must complete a weapons proficiency training course in accordance with Section 218.3.3.1 of this policy.

In the event that an application is denied at the conclusion of or during phase one, the applicant shall be notified in writing within 90 days of the initial application or within 30 days after receipt of the applicant's criminal background check from the Department of Justice, whichever is later.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

If a request for a license is denied based on lack of good cause, the notice of denial shall state the reason from this Department's policy.

#### 218.3.2 FEES

The application fee is \$50.00 of which a non-refundable fee (\$10.00) will be collected upon filing of the initial application. The balance of the fee (\$40.00) will be collected only upon issuance of the CCW permit.

The application fee does not include any additional fees required for fingerprinting, training or medical or psychological testing, as may be required or permitted, by code.

Payment of related fees may be waived if the applicant is a duly appointed reserve peace officer as defined by law.

#### 218.3.3 APPLICATION - PHASE TWO

This phase is to be completed only by those applicants successfully completing Phase One.

#### 218.3.4 WEAPONS PROFICIENCY

Upon preliminary approval of the permit (after reviewing the results of the Live Scan examination and DOJ criminal background investigation), the applicant shall complete a 16 hour course of training approved by the agency minimally including firearms safety and the laws regarding the permissible use of a firearm.

The applicant shall successfully complete the firearms safety and proficiency examination with the weapon to be licensed, to be administered by the department Rangemaster or provide proof of successful completion of another departmentally approved firearms safety and proficiency examination, including completion of the release contained in the Standard Application.

An applicant who has already successfully completed the weapons proficiency course prior to the approval of the application shall still be required to successfully pass only the shooting portion of the course if the date of last successful pass was more than 6 (six) months prior to the approval of the permit.

#### 218.3.5 WEAPONS INSPECTION

The Sheriff may require that an applicant submit any weapon to be considered for licensing purposes to the department's Rangemaster for a safety inspection. The Sheriff reserves the right to deny a license for any weapon that is illegal or that the Sheriff deems unsafe, which shall not include any firearm that may lawfully be possessed or transferred under California's Unsafe Handgun Act (Penal Code §31900 et seq.).

The illegal or unsafe alteration of any previously approved weapon including, but not limited to adjusting trigger pull, adding laser sights or modifications shall require resubmission of the weapon to be considered for licensing purposes to the department's Rangemaster for a safety inspection.

A maximum of three weapons may be listed on the concealed weapon permit.

## *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

### **218.4 LIMITED BUSINESS LICENSE TO CARRY A CONCEALED WEAPON**

The authority to issue a limited business license to carry a concealed weapon to a nonresident applicant is granted only to the Sheriff of the county in which the applicant works. A chief of a municipal police department may not issue limited licenses. Therefore, such applicants may be referred to the Sheriff for processing.

An individual who is not a resident of the County, but who otherwise successfully completes all portions of phases one and two above, may apply for and be issued a limited license subject to approval by the Sheriff and subject to the following:

- (a) The applicant physically spends a substantial period of working hours in the applicant's principal place of employment or business within the County of Merced.
- (b) Such a license will be valid for a period not to exceed 90 days from the date of issuance.
- (c) The applicant shall provide a copy of the license to the licensing authority of the city or county in which the applicant resides.
- (d) Any application for renewal or reissuance of such a license may be granted only upon concurrence of the original issuing authority and the licensing authority of the city or county in which the applicant resides.

### **218.5 LIMITED BUSINESS LICENSE TO CARRY A CONCEALED FIREARM**

The authority to issue a limited business license to carry a concealed firearm to a non-resident applicant is granted only to the Sheriff of the county in which the applicant works. A chief of a municipal police [department/office] may not issue limited licenses (Penal Code § 26150). Therefore, such applicants may be referred to the Sheriff for processing.

An individual who is not a resident of the county but who otherwise successfully completes all portions of phases one and two above, may apply for and be issued a limited license subject to approval by the Sheriff and subject to the following:

- (a) The applicant physically spends a substantial period of working hours in the applicant's principal place of employment or business within the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department (Penal Code § 26150).
- (b) Such a license will be valid for a period not to exceed 90 days from the date of issuance (Penal Code § 26220).
- (c) The applicant shall provide a copy of the license to the licensing authority of the city or county in which the applicant resides (Penal Code § 26220).
- (d) Any application for renewal or reissuance of such a license may be granted only upon concurrence of the original issuing authority and the licensing authority of the city or county in which the applicant resides (Penal Code § 26220).

## *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

### 218.5.1 LICENSE RESTRICTIONS

The Sheriff may place special restrictions limiting time, place and circumstances under which any license shall be valid. In addition to those restrictions set forth by law, the following restrictions shall apply if conspicuously noted on the license:

(a) The license shall not apply:

- (i) While licensee consumes or is under the influence of any alcoholic beverage.
- (ii) While the licensee is under the influence of any medication or drug whether prescribed or not which according to the licensee's treating physician or the manufacturers' warning labels provide notice that the drug(s) may impair mental and/or physical capabilities.
- (iii) To any firearms not listed on the license.
- (iv) At any location where alcohol is the primary product being served (e.g. bars, night clubs). The licensee may carry concealed in restaurants that serve alcohol in addition to a regular menu. The licensee shall not consume alcohol nor be present in the area that is primarily used to serve alcohol.
- (v) While in the commission of any crime.
- (vi) Outside the state of California.
- (vii) To firearms loaded with non-factory manufactured ammunition.
- (viii) Any previously approved weapon with illegal or unsafe alteration.

(b) The licensee shall not:

- (i) Refuse to show the license or provide for inspection the concealed weapon and ammunition carried under the license to any peace officer upon lawful demand.
- (ii) Interfere with any law enforcement officer's duties.
- (iii) Falsely represent himself or herself as a peace officer.
- (iv) Brandish a firearm unreasonably or without justification.

(c) The licensee shall:

- (i) Whenever contacted by a law enforcement official, in the event the licensee is carrying any concealed firearm under the license, the licensee must advise that official of the presence of the firearm(s).
- (ii) Fail to report any arrest of the licensee and/or conviction of a crime of the licensee, including.
- (iii) Be responsible for complying with the regulations concerning firearms and weapons of those respective carriers, facilities and properties.
- (iv) Immediately notify this department of any restraining orders, arrests or warrants that are issued against the licensee.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

#### 218.5.2 AMENDMENTS TO LICENSES

Any licensee may apply to amend a license at any time during the period of validity by completing and submitting a written Application for License Amendment along with the current processing fee to the Department in order to accomplish one or more of the following:

- (a) Add or delete authority to carry a firearm listed on the license.
- (b) Change restrictions or conditions previously placed on the license.
- (c) Change the address or other personal information of the licensee.

In the event that any amendment to a valid license is approved by the Sheriff, a new license will be issued reflecting the amendment(s). An amendment to any license will not serve to extend the original expiration date and an application for an amendment will not constitute an application for renewal of the license.

#### 218.5.3 REVOCATION OF LICENSES

Any license issued pursuant to this policy may be immediately revoked by the Sheriff for any of the following reasons:

- (a) If the licensee has violated any of the restrictions or conditions placed upon the license.
- (b) If the licensee becomes medically or psychologically unsuitable to carry a concealed weapon.
- (c) If the licensee is determined to be prohibited by state or federal law from possessing, receiving, owning or purchasing a firearm.
- (d) If the licensee engages in any conduct which involves a lack of good moral character or might otherwise remove the good cause for the original issuance of the license.
- (e) If any license is revoked, the Department will immediately notify the licensee and the Department of Justice pursuant to law.
- (f) If there is a material change in circumstances such that there is no longer good cause for the CCW permit.
- (g) Misrepresentation during the application process.

#### 218.5.4 SHORTENED TERMS

If a licensee's place of residence was the basis for issuance of a license, the term of a license by the Sheriff shall be shortened to 90 days after the licensee's residence is no longer within the County of Merced. If a licensee's place of business was the basis for issuance of a license, such license issued shall expire immediately after the licensee's business is no longer within the County of Merced. Such shortened terms shall not be deemed revocations.

#### 218.5.5 LICENSE RENEWAL

No later than 90 days prior to the expiration of any valid license to carry a concealed weapon, the licensee may apply to the Sheriff for a renewal by completing the following:

- (a) Verifying all information submitted in the original application under penalty of perjury.

## *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

- (b) Payment of a nonrefundable renewal application fee.
- (c) Sheriff may require additional information to verify and update the basis for issuance.

Once the Sheriff or authorized designee has verified the successful completion of renewal process, the renewal of the license to carry a concealed weapon will either be granted or denied – pending successful completion of the authorized training course. Approved renewal applicants shall complete an authorized training course of no less than four hours including firearms safety and the laws regarding the permissible use of a firearm. Approved renewal applicants shall also submit any weapon to be considered for a license renewal to the department's Rangemaster for a full safety inspection. Prior issuance of a license shall not entitle any licensee to any property or liberty right to renewal.

Whether an application for renewal is approved or denied, the applicant shall be notified in writing within 90 days of the renewal application or within 30 days after receipt of the applicant's criminal background check from DOJ, whichever is later.

### **218.6 ISSUED FIREARMS PERMITS**

In the event a license to carry a firearm is issued by the Sheriff, the following shall apply:

- (a) The license will be subject to any and all reasonable restrictions or conditions the Sheriff has deemed warranted, including restrictions as to the time, place, manner and circumstances under which the person may carry the firearm.
  - 1. All such restrictions or conditions shall be conspicuously noted on any license issued (Penal Code § 26200).
  - 2. The licensee will be required to sign a Restrictions and Conditions Agreement. Any violation of any of the restrictions and conditions may result in the immediate revocation of the license.
- (b) The license shall be laminated, bearing a photograph of the licensee with the expiration date, type of firearm, restrictions and other pertinent information clearly visible.
  - 1. Each license shall be numbered and clearly identify the licensee.
  - 2. All licenses shall be subjected to inspection by the Sheriff or any law enforcement officer.
- (c) The license will be valid for a period not to exceed two years from the date of issuance (Penal Code § 26220).
  - 1. A license issued to a state or federal magistrate, commissioner or judge will be valid for a period not to exceed three years.
  - 2. A license issued to any reserve peace officer as defined in Penal Code § 830.6(a) or (b), or a custodial officer employed by the Sheriff as provided in Penal Code § 831.5 will be valid for a period not to exceed four years, except

## *License to Carry a Firearm*

---

that such license shall be invalid upon the individual's conclusion of service as a reserve officer.

- (d) If the licensee's place of residence was the basis for issuance of a license and the licensee moves out of the county of issuance, the license shall expire 90 days after the licensee has moved (Penal Code § 26210).
- (e) The licensee shall notify this [department/office] in writing within 10 days of any change of place of residency.

### **218.7 [DEPARTMENT/OFFICE] REPORTING AND RECORDS**

Pursuant to Penal Code § 26225, the Sheriff shall maintain a record of the following and immediately provide copies of each to the California DOJ:

- (a) The denial of a license
- (b) The denial of an amendment to a license
- (c) The issuance of a license
- (d) The amendment of a license
- (e) The revocation of a license

The Sheriff shall annually submit to the State Attorney General the total number of licenses to carry firearms issued to reserve peace officers and judges.

## Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements

### 220.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the issuance, denial, suspension or revocation of Merced County Sheriff's Office identification cards under the Law Enforcement Officers' Safety Act (LEOSA) and California law (18 USC § 926C; Penal Code § 25455).

### 220.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to provide identification cards to qualified former or retired deputies as provided in this policy.

### 220.3 LEOSA

The Sheriff may issue an identification card for LEOSA purposes to any qualified former deputy of this department who (18 USC § 926C(c)):

- (a) Separated from service in good standing from this department as a deputy.
- (b) Before such separation, had regular employment as a law enforcement officer for an aggregate of 10 years or more or, if employed as a law enforcement officer for less than 10 years, separated from service after completing any applicable probationary period due to a service-connected disability as determined by this department.
- (c) Has not been disqualified for reasons related to mental health.
- (d) Has not entered into an agreement with this department where the deputy acknowledges that he/she is not qualified to receive a firearm qualification certificate for reasons related to mental health.
- (e) Is not prohibited by federal law from receiving or possessing a firearm.

#### 220.3.1 LEOSA IDENTIFICATION CARD FORMAT

The LEOSA identification card should contain a photograph of the former deputy and identify him/her as having been employed as a deputy.

If the Merced County Sheriff's Office qualifies the former deputy, the LEOSA identification card or separate certification should indicate the date the former deputy was tested or otherwise found by the Department to meet the active duty standards for qualification to carry a firearm.

#### 220.3.2 AUTHORIZATION

Any qualified former law enforcement officer, including a former deputy of this department, may carry a concealed firearm under 18 USC § 926C when he/she is:

- (a) In possession of photographic identification that identifies him/her as having been employed as a law enforcement officer, and one of the following:
  - 1. An indication from the person's former law enforcement agency that he/she has, within the past year, been tested or otherwise found by the law enforcement

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements*

---

agency to meet agency-established active duty standards for qualification in firearms training to carry a firearm of the same type as the concealed firearm.

2. A certification, issued by either the state in which the person resides or by a certified firearms instructor who is qualified to conduct a firearms qualification test for active duty law enforcement officers within that state, indicating that the person has, within the past year, been tested or otherwise found to meet the standards established by the state or, if not applicable, the standards of any agency in that state.
- (b) Not under the influence of alcohol or another intoxicating or hallucinatory drug or substance.
- (c) Not prohibited by federal law from receiving a firearm.
- (d) Not in a location prohibited by California law or by a private person or entity on his/her property if such prohibition is permitted by California law.

#### **220.4 CALIFORNIA IDENTIFICATION CARD ISSUANCE**

Any full-time sworn deputy of this department who was authorized to, and did, carry a concealed firearm during the course and scope of his/her employment shall be issued an identification card with a Carrying Concealed Weapon endorsement, "CCW Approved," upon honorable retirement (Penal Code § 25455).

- (a) For the purpose of this policy, honorably retired includes all peace officers who have qualified for, and accepted, a service or disability retirement. It shall not include any deputy who retires in lieu of termination.
- (b) No CCW Approved endorsement shall be issued to any deputy retiring because of a psychological disability (Penal Code § 26305).

##### **220.4.1 CALIFORNIA IDENTIFICATION CARD FORMAT**

The identification card issued to any qualified and honorably retired deputy shall be 2 inches by 3 inches, and minimally contain (Penal Code § 25460):

- (a) A photograph of the retiree.
- (b) The retiree's name and date of birth.
- (c) The date of retirement.
- (d) The name and address of this department.
- (e) A stamped CCW Approved endorsement along with the date by which the endorsement must be renewed (not more than one year). If a CCW endorsement has been denied or revoked, the identification card shall be stamped "No CCW Privilege."

##### **220.4.2 QUALIFIED RETIREES FROM INCORPORATED JURISDICTION**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office shall provide an identification card with a CCW Approved endorsement to honorably retired peace officers from any jurisdiction that this department now serves under the following conditions (Penal Code § 25905):

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements*

---

- (a) The retiree's previous agency is no longer providing law enforcement services or the relevant government body is dissolved.
- (b) This department is in possession of the retiree's complete personnel record or can verify the retiree's honorably retired status.
- (c) The retiree is in compliance with all of the requirements of this department for the issuance of a CCW Approved endorsement.

### **220.4.3 QUALIFIED RETIRED RESERVES**

Qualified retired reserve officers who meet the department requirements shall be provided an identification card with a CCW Approved endorsement (Penal Code § 26300).

### **220.5 FORMER DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

A former deputy with a card issued under this policy shall immediately notify the Undersheriff of his/her arrest or conviction in any jurisdiction, or that he/she is the subject of a court order, in accordance with the Reporting of Employee Convictions policy.

#### **220.5.1 RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER LEOSA**

In order to obtain or retain a LEOSA identification card, the former deputy shall:

- (a) Sign a waiver of liability of the Department for all acts taken related to carrying a concealed firearm, acknowledging both his/her personal responsibility as a private person for all acts taken when carrying a concealed firearm as permitted by LEOSA and also that these acts were not taken as an employee or former employee of the Department.
- (b) Remain subject to all applicable department policies and federal, state and local laws.
- (c) Demonstrate good judgment and character commensurate with carrying a loaded and concealed firearm.
- (d) Successfully pass an annual criminal history background check indicating that he/she is not prohibited by law from receiving or possessing a firearm.

#### **220.5.2 MAINTAINING A CALIFORNIA IDENTIFICATION CARD CCW ENDORSEMENT**

In order to maintain a CCW Approved endorsement on an identification card issued under California law, the retired deputy shall (Penal Code § 26305):

- (a) Qualify annually with the authorized firearm at a course approved by this department at the retired deputy's expense.
- (b) Remain subject to all applicable department policies and federal, state and local laws.
- (c) Not engage in conduct that compromises public safety.
- (d) Only be authorized to carry a concealed firearm inspected and approved by the Department.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements*

---

### **220.6 DENIAL, SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF A LEOSA IDENTIFICATION CARD**

A LEOSA identification card may be denied or revoked upon a showing of good cause as determined by the Department. In the event that an identification card is denied, suspended or revoked, the former deputy may request a review by the Sheriff. The decision of the Sheriff is final.

#### **220.6.1 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITY**

Employees who have reason to suspect a retiree's conduct has compromised public safety should notify the appropriate supervisor as soon as practical. A supervisor shall notify the Undersheriff who should take the following steps in these instances:

- (a) Take appropriate steps to promptly look into the matter.
- (b) If warranted, contact the retiree in person and advise him/her in writing of the following:
  - 1. The retiree's CCW endorsement is immediately and temporarily revoked.
  - 2. The retiree will have 15 days to request a hearing to determine whether the temporary revocation should become permanent.
  - 3. The retiree will forfeit his/ her right to a hearing and the CCW endorsement will be permanently revoked if the retiree fails to respond to the notice of hearing within the 15-day period.
- (c) A current copy of Penal Code § 26312 should be attached to the written notice.
- (d) In the event that personal contact with the retiree cannot be reasonably achieved in a timely manner, the Undersheriff should attempt to make the above notice of temporary revocation through another peace officer. For example, if a retiree was arrested or detained by a distant agency, the Undersheriff may request that a peace officer of that agency act as the Department's agent to deliver the written notification.
- (e) Notification of the temporary revocation should also be promptly mailed to the retiree via first class mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested (Penal Code § 26312(a)).
- (f) The Undersheriff should document in a memo the investigation, the actions taken, and, if applicable, any notification made to the retiree. The memo should be forwarded to the Sheriff.

### **220.7 DENIAL, SUSPENSION OR REVOCATION OF A CALIFORNIA CCW ENDORSEMENT CARD**

A CCW endorsement under Penal Code § 25470 for any deputy retired from this department may be denied or revoked only upon a showing of good cause. The CCW endorsement may be immediately and temporarily revoked by the on duty Sergeant when the conduct of a retired peace officer compromises public safety.

- (a) In the event that a CCW endorsement is initially denied, the retired deputy shall have 15 days from the date of denial to request a formal hearing. The failure to submit

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements*

---

a timely written request for a hearing shall be deemed a waiver of such right. The hearing, absent written agreement between the parties, shall be held no later than 120 days after the request is received.

- (b) Prior to revocation of any CCW endorsement, the Department shall provide the affected retiree with written notice of a hearing by either personal service or first class mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested to the retiree's last known address (Penal Code § 26315).
  - 1. The retiree shall have 15 days from the date of service to file a written request for a hearing.
  - 2. The hearing, absent written agreement between the parties, shall be held no later than 120 days after the request is received (Penal Code § 26315).
  - 3. The failure to submit a timely written request for a hearing shall be deemed a waiver of such right.
- (c) A hearing for the denial or revocation of any CCW endorsement shall be conducted before a hearing board composed of three members, one selected by the Department, one selected by the retiree or his/her employee organization and one selected jointly (Penal Code § 26320).
  - 1. The decision of such hearing board shall be binding on the Department and the retiree.
  - 2. Any retiree who waives the right to a hearing or whose CCW endorsement has been revoked at a hearing shall immediately surrender his/her identification card. The Department will then reissue a new identification card which shall be stamped "No CCW Privilege."
- (d) Members who have reason to suspect the conduct of a retiree has compromised public safety shall notify the on duty Sergeant as soon as practicable. The on duty Sergeant should promptly take appropriate steps to look into the matter and, if warranted, contact the retiree in person and advise him/her of the temporary suspension and hearing information listed below.
  - 1. Notification of the temporary suspension should also be promptly mailed to the retiree via first class mail, postage prepaid, return receipt requested (Penal Code § 26312).
  - 2. The on duty Sergeant should document the investigation, the actions taken and, if applicable, any notification made to the retiree. The memo should be forwarded to the Sheriff.
  - 3. The personal and written notification should be as follows:
    - (a) The retiree's CCW endorsement is immediately and temporarily suspended.
    - (b) The retiree has 15 days to request a hearing to determine whether the temporary suspension should become permanent revocation.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Retired Deputy CCW Endorsements*

---

- (c) The retiree will forfeit his/her right to a hearing and the CCW endorsement will be permanently revoked if the retiree fails to respond to the notice of hearing within the 15-day period.
- 4. In the event that personal contact with the retiree cannot be reasonably achieved in a timely manner, the on duty Sergeant should attempt to make the above notice of temporary suspension through another law enforcement officer. For example, if a retiree was arrested or detained by a distant agency, the on duty Sergeant may request that a law enforcement officer from that agency act as the agent of the Department to deliver the written notification.

### **220.8 FIREARM QUALIFICATIONS**

The Rangemaster may provide former deputies from this department an opportunity to qualify. Written evidence of the qualification and the weapons used will be provided and will contain the date of the qualification. The Rangemaster will maintain a record of the qualifications and weapons used.

## **Chapter 3 - General Operations**

## Use of Force

### 300.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines on the reasonable use of force. While there is no way to specify the exact amount or type of reasonable force to be applied in any situation, every member of this Office is expected to use these guidelines to make such decisions in a professional, impartial and reasonable manner.

#### 300.1.1 DEFINITIONS

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Deputies are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied human encounters and when warranted, may use force in carrying out their duties.

Deputies must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, the limitations of their authority. This is especially true with respect to deputies overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of their duties.

The Department recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. It is also understood that vesting deputies with the authority to use reasonable force and protect the public welfare requires a careful balancing of all human interests.

### 300.2 POLICY

The use of force by law enforcement personnel is a matter of critical concern, both to the public and to the law enforcement community. Deputies are involved on a daily basis in numerous and varied interactions and, when warranted, may use reasonable force in carrying out their duties.

Deputies must have an understanding of, and true appreciation for, their authority and limitations. This is especially true with respect to overcoming resistance while engaged in the performance of law enforcement duties.

The [Department/Office] recognizes and respects the value of all human life and dignity without prejudice to anyone. Vesting deputies with the authority to use reasonable force and to protect the public welfare requires monitoring, evaluation and a careful balancing of all interests.

#### 300.2.1 DUTY TO INTERCEDE

Any deputy present and observing another deputy using force that is clearly beyond that which is objectively reasonable under the circumstances shall, when in a position to do so, intercede to prevent the use of unreasonable force. A deputy who observes another employee use force that exceeds the degree of force permitted by law should promptly report these observations to a supervisor.

### 300.3 USE OF FORCE

Deputies shall use only that amount of force that reasonably appears necessary given the facts and circumstances perceived by the deputy at the time of the event to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

## *Use of Force*

---

The reasonableness of force will be judged from the perspective of a reasonable deputy on the scene at the time of the incident. Any evaluation of reasonableness must allow for the fact that deputies are often forced to make split-second decisions about the amount of force that reasonably appears necessary in a particular situation, with limited information and in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving.

Given that no policy can realistically predict every possible situation a deputy might encounter, deputies are entrusted to use well-reasoned discretion in determining the appropriate use of force in each incident.

It is also recognized that circumstances may arise in which deputies reasonably believe that it would be impractical or ineffective to use any of the tools, weapons or methods provided by the [Department/Office]. Deputies may find it more effective or reasonable to improvise their response to rapidly unfolding conditions that they are confronting. In such circumstances, the use of any improvised device or method must nonetheless be reasonable and utilized only to the degree that reasonably appears necessary to accomplish a legitimate law enforcement purpose.

While the ultimate objective of every law enforcement encounter is to avoid or minimize injury, nothing in this policy requires a deputy to retreat or be exposed to possible physical injury before applying reasonable force.

### **300.3.1 USE OF FORCE TO EFFECT AN ARREST**

Any peace officer may use reasonable force to effect an arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance. A peace officer who makes or attempts to make an arrest need not retreat or desist from his/her efforts by reason of resistance or threatened resistance on the part of the person being arrested; nor shall a deputy be deemed the aggressor or lose his/her right to self-defense by the use of reasonable force to effect the arrest, prevent escape or to overcome resistance (Penal Code § 835a).

### **300.3.2 FACTORS USED TO DETERMINE THE REASONABLENESS OF FORCE**

When determining whether to apply force and evaluating whether a deputy has used reasonable force, a number of factors should be taken into consideration, as time and circumstances permit. These factors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Immediacy and severity of the threat to deputies or others.
- (b) The conduct of the individual being confronted, as reasonably perceived by the deputy at the time.
- (c) Deputy/subject factors (age, size, relative strength, skill level, injuries sustained, level of exhaustion or fatigue, the number of deputies available vs. subjects).
- (d) The effects of drugs or alcohol.
- (e) Subject's mental state or capacity.
- (f) Proximity of weapons or dangerous improvised devices.

## *Use of Force*

---

- (g) The degree to which the subject has been effectively restrained and his/her ability to resist despite being restrained.
- (h) The availability of other options and their possible effectiveness.
- (i) Seriousness of the suspected offense or reason for contact with the individual.
- (j) Training and experience of the deputy.
- (k) Potential for injury to deputies, suspects and others.
- (l) Whether the person appears to be resisting, attempting to evade arrest by flight or is attacking the deputy.
- (m) The risk and reasonably foreseeable consequences of escape.
- (n) The apparent need for immediate control of the subject or a prompt resolution of the situation.
- (o) Whether the conduct of the individual being confronted no longer reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to the deputy or others.
- (p) Prior contacts with the subject or awareness of any propensity for violence.
- (q) Any other exigent circumstances.

### 300.3.3 PAIN COMPLIANCE TECHNIQUES

Pain compliance techniques may be effective in controlling a physically or actively resisting individual. Deputies may only apply those pain compliance techniques for which they have successfully completed [department/office]-approved training. Deputies utilizing any pain compliance technique should consider:

- (a) The degree to which the application of the technique may be controlled given the level of resistance.
- (b) Whether the person can comply with the direction or orders of the deputy.
- (c) Whether the person has been given sufficient opportunity to comply.

The application of any pain compliance technique shall be discontinued once the deputy determines that compliance has been achieved.

### 300.3.4 CAROTID CONTROL HOLD

The proper application of the carotid control hold may be effective in restraining a violent or combative individual. However, due to the potential for injury, the use of the carotid control hold is subject to the following:

- (a) The deputy shall have successfully completed [department/office]-approved training in the use and application of the carotid control hold.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Use of Force*

---

- (b) The carotid control hold may only be used when circumstances perceived by the deputy at the time indicate that such application reasonably appears necessary to control a person in any of the following circumstances:
  - 1. The subject is violent or physically resisting.
  - 2. The subject, by words or actions, has demonstrated an intention to be violent and reasonably appears to have the potential to harm deputies, him/herself or others.
- (c) The application of a carotid control hold on the following individuals should generally be avoided unless the totality of the circumstances indicates that other available options reasonably appear ineffective, or would present a greater danger to the deputy, the subject or others, and the deputy reasonably believes that the need to control the individual outweighs the risk of applying a carotid control hold:
  - 1. Females who are known to be pregnant
  - 2. Elderly individuals
  - 3. Obvious juveniles
  - 4. Individuals who appear to have Down syndrome or who appear to have obvious neck deformities or malformations, or visible neck injuries
- (d) Any individual who has had the carotid control hold applied, regardless of whether he/she was rendered unconscious, shall be promptly examined by paramedics or other qualified medical personnel and should be monitored until examined by paramedics or other appropriate medical personnel.
- (e) The deputy shall inform any person receiving custody, or any person placed in a position of providing care, that the individual has been subjected to the carotid control hold and whether the subject lost consciousness as a result.
- (f) Any deputy attempting or applying the carotid control hold shall promptly notify a supervisor of the use or attempted use of such hold.
- (g) The use or attempted use of the carotid control hold shall be thoroughly documented by the deputy in any related reports.

#### 300.3.5 USE OF FORCE TO SEIZE EVIDENCE

In general, deputies may use reasonable force to lawfully seize evidence and to prevent the destruction of evidence. However, deputies are discouraged from using force solely to prevent a person from swallowing evidence or contraband. In the instance when force is used, deputies should not intentionally use any technique that restricts blood flow to the head, restricts respiration or which creates a reasonable likelihood that blood flow to the head or respiration would be restricted. Deputies are encouraged to use techniques and methods taught by the Merced County Sheriff's Office for this specific purpose.

## *Use of Force*

---

### **300.4 DEADLY FORCE APPLICATIONS**

Use of deadly force is justified in the following circumstances:

- (a) A deputy may use deadly force to protect him/herself or others from what he/she reasonably believes would be an imminent threat of death or serious bodily injury.
- (b) A deputy may use deadly force to stop a fleeing subject when the deputy has probable cause to believe that the person has committed, or intends to commit, a felony involving the infliction or threatened infliction of serious bodily injury or death, and the deputy reasonably believes that there is an imminent risk of serious bodily injury or death to any other person if the subject is not immediately apprehended. Under such circumstances, a verbal warning should precede the use of deadly force, where feasible.

Imminent does not mean immediate or instantaneous. An imminent danger may exist even if the suspect is not at that very moment pointing a weapon at someone. For example, an imminent danger may exist if a deputy reasonably believes any of the following:

- 1. The person has a weapon or is attempting to access one and it is reasonable to believe the person intends to use it against the deputy or another.
- 2. The person is capable of causing serious bodily injury or death without a weapon and it is reasonable to believe the person intends to do so.

#### **300.4.1 SHOOTING AT OR FROM MOVING VEHICLES**

Shots fired at or from a moving vehicle are rarely effective. Deputies should move out of the path of an approaching vehicle instead of discharging their firearm at the vehicle or any of its occupants. A deputy should only discharge a firearm at a moving vehicle or its occupants when the deputy reasonably believes there are no other reasonable means available to avert the threat of the vehicle, or if deadly force other than the vehicle is directed at the deputy or others.

Deputies should not shoot at any part of a vehicle in an attempt to disable the vehicle.

### **300.5 REPORTING THE USE OF FORCE**

Any use of force by a member of this [department/office] shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately in an appropriate report, depending on the nature of the incident. The deputy should articulate the factors perceived and why he/she believed the use of force was reasonable under the circumstances. To collect data for purposes of training, resource allocation, analysis and related purposes, the [Department/Office] may require the completion of additional report forms, as specified in [department/office] policy, procedure or law.

#### **300.5.1 NOTIFICATION TO SUPERVISORS**

Supervisory notification shall be made as soon as practicable following the application of force in any of the following circumstances:

- (a) The application caused a visible injury.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Use of Force*

---

- (b) The application would lead a reasonable deputy to conclude that the individual may have experienced more than momentary discomfort.
- (c) The individual subjected to the force complained of injury or continuing pain.
- (d) The individual indicates intent to pursue litigation.
- (e) Any application of a TASER device or control device.
- (f) Any application of a restraint device other than handcuffs, shackles or belly chains.
- (g) The individual subjected to the force was rendered unconscious.
- (h) An individual was struck or kicked.
- (i) An individual alleges any of the above has occurred.

#### **300.5.2 REPORTING TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

The Records Supervisor or the authorized designee shall ensure that all statistical data regarding all officer-involved shootings and incidents involving use of force resulting in serious bodily injury is to be reported to the California Department of Justice as required by Government Code § 12525.2. See the Records Division policy.

#### **300.6 MEDICAL CONSIDERATION**

Prior to booking or release, medical assistance shall be obtained for any person who exhibits signs of physical distress, who has sustained visible injury, expresses a complaint of injury or continuing pain, or who was rendered unconscious. Any individual exhibiting signs of physical distress after an encounter should be continuously monitored until he/she can be medically assessed.

Based upon the deputy's initial assessment of the nature and extent of the subject's injuries, medical assistance may consist of examination by fire personnel, paramedics, hospital staff or medical staff at the jail. If any such individual refuses medical attention, such a refusal shall be fully documented in related reports and, whenever practicable, should be witnessed by another deputy and/or medical personnel. If a recording is made of the contact or an interview with the individual, any refusal should be included in the recording, if possible.

The on-scene supervisor or, if the on-scene supervisor is not available, the primary handling deputy shall ensure that any person providing medical care or receiving custody of a person following any use of force is informed that the person was subjected to force. This notification shall include a description of the force used and any other circumstances the deputy reasonably believes would be potential safety or medical risks to the subject (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration).

Persons who exhibit extreme agitation, violent irrational behavior accompanied by profuse sweating, extraordinary strength beyond their physical characteristics and imperviousness to pain (sometimes called "excited delirium"), or who require a protracted physical encounter with multiple deputies to be brought under control, may be at an increased risk of sudden death. Calls involving these persons should be considered medical emergencies. Deputies who reasonably suspect a

## *Use of Force*

---

medical emergency should request medical assistance as soon as practicable and have medical personnel stage away if appropriate.

### **300.7 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

When a supervisor is able to respond to an incident in which there has been a reported application of force, the supervisor is expected to:

- (a) Obtain the basic facts from the involved deputies. Absent an allegation of misconduct or excessive force, this will be considered a routine contact in the normal course of duties.
- (b) Ensure that any injured parties are examined and treated.
- (c) When possible, separately obtain a recorded interview with the subject upon whom force was applied. If this interview is conducted without the person having voluntarily waived his/her *Miranda* rights, the following shall apply:
  - 1. The content of the interview should not be summarized or included in any related criminal charges.
  - 2. The fact that a recorded interview was conducted should be documented in a property or other report.
  - 3. The recording of the interview should be distinctly marked for retention until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (d) Once any initial medical assessment has been completed or first aid has been rendered, ensure that photographs have been taken of any areas involving visible injury or complaint of pain, as well as overall photographs of uninjured areas. These photographs should be retained until all potential for civil litigation has expired.
- (e) Identify any witnesses not already included in related reports.
- (f) Review and approve all related reports.
- (g) Determine if there is any indication that the subject may pursue civil litigation.
  - 1. If there is an indication of potential civil litigation, the supervisor should complete and route a notification of a potential claim through the appropriate channels.
- (h) Evaluate the circumstances surrounding the incident and initiate an administrative investigation if there is a question of policy non-compliance or if for any reason further investigation may be appropriate.

In the event that a supervisor is unable to respond to the scene of an incident involving the reported application of force, the supervisor is still expected to complete as many of the above items as circumstances permit.

## *Use of Force*

---

### **300.8 TRAINING**

Deputies will receive periodic training on this policy and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

### **300.9 USE OF FORCE ANALYSIS**

At least annually, each Area Lieutenant should prepare an analysis report on use of force incidents. The report should be submitted to the Sheriff. The report should not contain the names of deputies, suspects or case numbers, and should include:

- (a) The identification of any trends in the use of force by members.
- (b) Training needs recommendations.
- (c) Equipment needs recommendations.
- (d) Policy revision recommendations.

# Deadly Force Review

## 302.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a process to review the use of deadly force by employees of this department.

## 302.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will objectively evaluate the use of force by its members to ensure that their authority is used lawfully, appropriately and is consistent with training and policy.

## 302.3 REMOVAL FROM LINE DUTY ASSIGNMENT

Generally, whenever an employee's actions or use of force in an official capacity, or while using department equipment, results in death or very serious injury to another or in the judgment of the Sheriff, that employee will be placed in a temporary administrative assignment pending an administrative review. The Sheriff may exercise discretion and choose not to place an employee in an administrative assignment in any case.

## 302.4 REVIEW BOARD

The Use of Force Review Board will be convened when the use of force by a member results in very serious injury or death to another.

The Use of Force Review Board will also investigate and review the circumstances surrounding every discharge of a firearm, whether the employee was on- or off-duty, excluding training or recreational use.

The Sheriff may request the Use of Force Review Board to investigate the circumstances surrounding any use of force incident.

The Operations Division Captain will convene the Use of Force Review Board as necessary. It will be the responsibility of the supervisor of the involved employee to notify the Operations Division Captain of any incidents requiring board review. The involved employee's supervisor will also ensure that all relevant reports, documents and materials are available for consideration and review by the board.

### 302.4.1 COMPOSITION OF THE BOARD

The Use of Force Review Board members shall be comprised of the following:

- 1) Captain
- 2) Administrative Sergeant
- 3) Operations Division Sergeant who does not supervise the employee(s) who is the subject of the inquiry

## *Deadly Force Review*

---

### 302.4.2 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE BOARD

The Use of Force Review Board is empowered to conduct an administrative review and inquiry into the circumstances of an incident for the purposes of recommending improvements to policy and training related to the use of force.

The Sheriff will determine whether the board should delay its review until after completion of any criminal investigation, review by any prosecutorial body, filing of criminal charges, the decision not to file criminal charges, internal administrative investigation or any other action. The board should be provided all relevant available material from these proceedings for its consideration. The board members may request further investigation, request reports be submitted for the board's review, call persons to present information and request the involved employee to appear. The involved employee will be notified of the meeting of the board and may choose to have a representative through all phases of the review process.

The board does not have the authority to recommend discipline.

Absent an express waiver from the employee, no more than two members of the board may ask questions of the involved employee (Government Code § 3303). Other members may provide questions to these members.

The review shall be based upon those facts which were reasonably believed or known by the deputy at the time of the incident, applying any legal requirements, department policies, procedures and approved training to those facts. Facts later discovered but unknown to the deputy at the time shall neither justify nor call into question a deputy's decision regarding the use of force.

Any questioning of the involved employee conducted by the board will be in accordance with the department's disciplinary procedures, the current collective bargaining agreement and any applicable state or federal law.

The board shall make one of the following determinations:

- (a) No action needed.
- (b) Appropriate recommendations for policy and training.

Either determination requires a majority vote of the board. The board chairperson will submit the written determination to the Operations Division Captain.

The Operations Division Captain shall review the determination and any recommendations and forward the information to the Sheriff for final action.

# Handcuffing and Restraints

## 306.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the use of handcuffs and other restraints during detentions and arrests.

## 306.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office authorizes the use of restraint devices in accordance with this policy, the Use of Force Policy and department training.

## 306.3 USE OF RESTRAINTS

Only members who have successfully completed Merced County Sheriff's Office-approved training on the use of restraint devices described in this policy are authorized to use these devices.

When deciding whether to use any restraint, deputies should carefully balance officer safety concerns with factors that include, but are not limited to:

- The circumstances or crime leading to the arrest.
- The demeanor and behavior of the arrested person.
- The age and health of the person.
- Whether the person is known to be pregnant.
- Whether the person has a hearing or speaking disability. In such cases, consideration should be given, safety permitting, to handcuffing to the front in order to allow the person to sign or write notes.
- Whether the person has any other apparent disability.

### 306.3.1 RESTRAINT OF DETAINEES

Situations may arise where it may be reasonable to restrain an individual who may, after brief investigation, be released without arrest. Unless arrested, the use of restraints on detainees should continue only for as long as is reasonably necessary to assure the safety of deputies and others. When deciding whether to remove restraints from a detainee, deputies should continuously weigh the safety interests at hand against the continuing intrusion upon the detainee.

### 306.3.2 RESTRAINT OF PREGNANT PERSONS

It is in the interest of the Merced County Corrections Division to provide reasonable and necessary restraint devices, security and safety standards, control, supervision, and oversight of pregnant inmates while inside and outside Corrections Facilities. Restraints may be used for the temporary control of pregnant inmates and those inmates during delivery and in recovery after delivery and are never used for punishment, nor will they be used in lieu of proper medical/mental health treatment. This policy conforms to Penal Code Section 3407. Types of Restraint Device: 1. Handcuffs: An inmate known to be pregnant or in recovery after delivery may be restrained by

## *Handcuffing and Restraints*

---

the use of handcuffs in front of the inmate's body. An inmate known to be pregnant or in recovery after delivery shall not be restrained by the use of leg irons, waist chains, or handcuffs behind the body. A pregnant inmate in labor, during delivery, or in recovery after delivery, shall not be restrained by the wrists, ankles, or both, unless deemed necessary for the safety and security of the inmate, the staff, or the public. 2. Other Restraint Devices: Other department approved restraint devices such as leg and waist restraints are prohibited from being applied to such inmates unless deemed necessary for the safety and security of the inmate, the staff, or the public. Removal of Restraints: Restraints shall be removed as soon as practical and safe to do so. Restraints shall be removed when a professional who is currently responsible for the medical care of a pregnant inmate during a medical emergency, labor, delivery, or recovery after delivery determines that the removal of restraints is medically necessary. Notification to Pregnant Inmates: Upon confirmation of an inmate's pregnancy, she shall be advised, orally or in writing, of the standards and policies governing pregnant inmates, including, but not limited to, the relevant regulations and the correctional facility policies. Documentation and Supervisory Notification: If, at any time during pregnancy, during delivery, or in recovery after delivery, an inmate is secured with any type of restraint, the use of restraints will be documented and the shift supervisor will be notified immediately.

### **306.3.3 RESTRAINT OF JUVENILES**

A juvenile may be restrained when he/she is suspected of a dangerous felony or when the deputy has a reasonable suspicion that the juvenile may resist, attempt escape, injure him/herself, injure the deputy or damage property.

### **306.3.4 NOTIFICATIONS**

Whenever a deputy transports a person with the use of restraints other than handcuffs, the deputy shall inform the jail staff upon arrival at the jail that restraints were used. This notification should include information regarding any other circumstances the deputy reasonably believes would be potential safety concerns or medical risks to the subject (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration) that may have occurred prior to, or during transportation to the jail.

### **306.4 APPLICATION OF HANDCUFFS OR PLASTIC CUFFS**

Handcuffs, including temporary nylon or plastic cuffs, may be used only to restrain a person's hands to ensure officer safety.

Although recommended for most arrest situations, handcuffing is discretionary and not an absolute requirement of the Department. Deputies should consider handcuffing any person they reasonably believe warrants that degree of restraint. However, deputies should not conclude that in order to avoid risk every person should be handcuffed, regardless of the circumstances.

In most situations handcuffs should be applied with the hands behind the person's back. When feasible, handcuffs should be double-locked to prevent tightening, which may cause undue discomfort or injury to the hands or wrists.

## *Handcuffing and Restraints*

---

In situations where one pair of handcuffs does not appear sufficient to restrain the individual or may cause unreasonable discomfort due to the person's size, deputies should consider alternatives, such as using an additional set of handcuffs or multiple plastic cuffs.

Handcuffs should be removed as soon as it is reasonable or after the person has been searched and is safely confined within a detention facility.

### **306.5 APPLICATION OF SPIT HOODS/MASKS/SOCKS**

Spit hoods/masks/socks are temporary protective devices designed to prevent the wearer from biting and/or transferring or transmitting fluids (saliva and mucous) to others.

Spit hoods may be placed upon persons in custody when the deputy reasonably believes the person will bite or spit, either on a person or in an inappropriate place. They are generally used during application of a physical restraint, while the person is restrained, or during or after transport.

Deputies utilizing spit hoods should ensure that the spit hood is fastened properly to allow for adequate ventilation and that the restrained person can breathe normally. Deputies should provide assistance during the movement of restrained individuals due to the potential for impaired or distorted vision on the part of the individual. Deputies should avoid comingling individuals wearing spit hoods with other detainees.

Spit hoods should not be used in situations where the restrained person is bleeding profusely from the area around the mouth or nose, or if there are indications that the person has a medical condition, such as difficulty breathing or vomiting. In such cases, prompt medical care should be obtained. If the person vomits while wearing a spit hood, the spit hood should be promptly removed and discarded. Persons who have been sprayed with oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray should be thoroughly decontaminated including hair, head and clothing prior to application of a spit hood.

Those who have been placed in a spit hood should be continually monitored and shall not be left unattended until the spit hood is removed. Spit hoods shall be discarded after each use.

### **306.6 APPLICATION OF AUXILIARY RESTRAINT DEVICES**

Auxiliary restraint devices include transport belts, waist or belly chains, transportation chains, leg irons and other similar devices. Auxiliary restraint devices are intended for use during long-term restraint or transportation. They provide additional security and safety without impeding breathing, while permitting adequate movement, comfort and mobility.

Only department-authorized devices may be used. Any person in auxiliary restraints should be monitored as reasonably appears necessary.

### **306.7 APPLICATION OF LEG RESTRAINT DEVICES**

Leg restraints may be used to restrain the legs of a violent or potentially violent person when it is reasonable to do so during the course of detention, arrest or transportation. Only restraint devices approved by the Department shall be used.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Handcuffing and Restraints*

---

In determining whether to use the leg restraint, deputies should consider:

- (a) Whether the deputy or others could be exposed to injury due to the assaultive or resistant behavior of a suspect.
- (b) Whether it is reasonably necessary to protect the suspect from his/her own actions (e.g., hitting his/her head against the interior of the patrol unit, running away from the arresting deputy while handcuffed, kicking at objects or deputies).
- (c) Whether it is reasonably necessary to avoid damage to property (e.g., kicking at windows of the patrol unit).

#### 306.7.1 GUIDELINES FOR USE OF LEG RESTRAINTS

When applying leg restraints the following guidelines should be followed:

- (a) If practicable, deputies should notify a supervisor of the intent to apply the leg restraint device. In all cases, a supervisor shall be notified as soon as practicable after the application of the leg restraint device.
- (b) Once applied, absent a medical or other emergency, restraints should remain in place until the deputy arrives at the jail or other facility or the person no longer reasonably appears to pose a threat.
- (c) Once secured, the person should be placed in a seated or upright position, secured with a seat belt, and shall not be placed on his/her stomach for an extended period, as this could reduce the person's ability to breathe.
- (d) The restrained person should be continually monitored by a deputy while in the leg restraint. The deputy should ensure that the person does not roll onto and remain on his/her stomach.
- (e) The deputy should look for signs of labored breathing and take appropriate steps to relieve and minimize any obvious factors contributing to this condition.
- (f) When transported by ambulance/paramedic unit, the restrained person should be accompanied by a deputy when requested by medical personnel. The transporting deputy should describe to medical personnel any unusual behaviors or other circumstances the deputy reasonably believes would be potential safety or medical risks to the subject (e.g., prolonged struggle, extreme agitation, impaired respiration).

#### 306.7.2 APPLICATION OF SUPPLEMENTAL LEG RESTRAINT DEVICE ("SIT-BELT")

The supplemental leg restraint device ("SIT-BELT") may be applied to restrict a subject from kicking and being violent. It is specially designed for use with the "RIPP HOBBLE" to enable a deputy to place a restrained subject in a safe seated position. Both restraint devices should be applied and removed carefully to avoid injury to either the officer or the subject.

## *Handcuffing and Restraints*

---

### **306.8 REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION**

If an individual is restrained and released without an arrest, the deputy shall document the details of the detention and the need for handcuffs or other restraints.

If an individual is arrested, the use of restraints other than handcuffs shall be documented in the related report. The deputy should include, as appropriate:

- (a) The amount of time the suspect was restrained.
- (b) How the suspect was transported and the position of the suspect.
- (c) Observations of the suspect's behavior and any signs of physiological problems.
- (d) Any known or suspected drug use or other medical problems.

## Control Devices and Techniques

### 308.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the use and maintenance of control devices that are described in this policy.

### 308.2 POLICY

In order to control subjects who are violent or who demonstrate the intent to be violent, the Merced County Sheriff's Office authorizes deputies to use control devices in accordance with the guidelines in this policy and the Use of Force Policy.

### 308.3 ISSUING, CARRYING AND USING CONTROL DEVICES

Control devices described in this policy may be carried and used by members of this department only if the device has been issued by the Department or approved by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

Only deputies who have successfully completed department-approved training in the use of any control device are authorized to carry and use the device.

Control devices may be used when a decision has been made to control, restrain or arrest a subject who is violent or who demonstrates the intent to be violent, and the use of the device appears reasonable under the circumstances. When reasonable, a verbal warning and opportunity to comply should precede the use of these devices.

When using control devices, deputies should carefully consider potential impact areas in order to minimize injuries and unintentional targets.

### 308.4 DEPUTY SHERIFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Every control device, issued equipment and safety gear should be periodically inspected.

Firearms should be inspected by the authorized department Armorer, Rangemaster, or other designated employee. Other specialty equipment (Taser, RCB, etc) should be inspected by department authorized employees who are trained for the particular control device/equipment to ensure its operational status.

#### 308.4.1 AREA LIEUTENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

All personnel authorized to carry oleoresin capsicum spray, shall complete the required course of instruction prior to possessing and using the oleoresin capsicum spray.

#### 308.4.2 ADMINISTRATIVE SERGEANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Uniformed field personnel carrying the oleoresin capsicum spray shall carry the device in its holster on the equipment belt. Refer to section 308.6.1 regarding plainclothes deputies carrying oleoresin capsicum.

## *Control Devices and Techniques*

---

Canisters involved in any type of malfunction or damage shall be turned in to Administrative Sergeant for exchange. Damage to County Property forms shall also be forwarded to the appropriate supervisor and shall explain the cause of damage.

Oleoresin capsicum ("Pepper Spray") is legally classified as intermediate force. Its use must be justified accordingly.

### **308.4.3 USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

All normal maintenance, charging or cleaning shall remain the responsibility of personnel using the various devices.

Any damaged, inoperative, outdated or expended control devices or munitions, along with documentation explaining the cause of the damage, shall be returned to the Rangemaster for disposition. Damage to County property forms shall also be prepared and forwarded through the chain of command, when appropriate, explaining the cause of damage.

### **308.4.4 REPORT OF USE**

All uses of chemical agents shall be documented in the related arrest/crime report.

## **308.5 TEAR GAS GUIDELINES**

Tear gas may be used for crowd control, crowd dispersal or against barricaded suspects based on the circumstances. Only the SWAT Commander or Incident Commander may authorize the delivery and use of tear gas, and only after evaluating all conditions known at the time and determining that such force reasonably appears justified and necessary.

When practicable, fire personnel should be alerted or summoned to the scene prior to the deployment of tear gas to control any fires and to assist in providing medical aid or gas evacuation if needed.

### **308.5.1 MAINTENANCE RESPONSIBILITY**

All normal maintenance, charging or cleaning shall remain the responsibility of personnel using the various devices.

## **308.6 OLEORESIN CAPSICUM (OC) GUIDELINES**

As with other control devices, oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray and pepper projectiles may be considered for use to bring under control an individual or groups of individuals who are engaging in, or are about to engage in violent behavior. Pepper projectiles and OC spray should not, however, be used against individuals or groups who merely fail to disperse or do not reasonably appear to present a risk to the safety of officers or the public.

### **308.6.1 OC SPRAY PLAINCLOTHES DEPUTIES**

Plainclothes personnel carrying OC spray shall carry the device in an approved plainclothes holster. Plainclothes and non-field personnel may carry OC spray as authorized, in accordance with the needs of their assignment or at the direction of their supervisor.

## *Control Devices and Techniques*

---

### **308.6.2 PEPPER PROJECTILE SYSTEMS**

Pepper projectiles are plastic spheres that are filled with a derivative of OC powder. Because the compressed gas launcher delivers the projectiles with enough force to burst the projectiles on impact and release the OC powder, the potential exists for the projectiles to inflict injury if they strike the head, neck, spine or groin. Therefore, personnel using a pepper projectile system should not intentionally target those areas, except when the deputy reasonably believes the suspect poses an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the deputy or others.

Deputies encountering a situation that warrants the use of a pepper projectile system shall notify a supervisor as soon as practicable. A supervisor shall respond to all pepper projectile system incidents where the suspect has been hit or exposed to the chemical agent. The supervisor shall ensure that all notifications and reports are completed as required by the Use of Force Policy.

Each deployment of a pepper projectile system shall be documented. This includes situations where the launcher was directed toward the suspect, whether or not the launcher was used. Unintentional discharges shall be promptly reported to a supervisor and documented on the appropriate report form. Only non-incident use of a pepper projectile system, such as training and product demonstrations, is exempt from the reporting requirement.

### **308.6.3 TREATMENT FOR OC SPRAY EXPOSURE**

Persons who have been sprayed with or otherwise affected by the use of OC should be promptly provided with clean water to cleanse the affected areas. Those persons who complain of further severe effects shall be examined by appropriate medical personnel.

Whenever tear gas or OC has been introduced into a structure, vehicle, or other enclosed area, deputies should provide the owners or occupants with notice of the possible presence of residue that could result in irritation or injury if the area is not properly cleaned. Such notice should include that clean up will be at the owner's expense. Information regarding the method of notice and the individuals notified should be included in related reports.

### **308.7 POST-APPLICATION NOTICE**

Whenever tear gas or OC has been introduced into a residence, building interior, vehicle or other enclosed area, deputies should provide the owners or available occupants with notice of the possible presence of residue that could result in irritation or injury if the area is not properly cleaned. Such notice should include advisement that clean up will be at the owner's expense. Information regarding the method of notice and the individuals notified should be included in related reports.

### **308.8 KINETIC ENERGY PROJECTILE GUIDELINES**

The Sheriff's Office is committed to reducing the potential for violent confrontations. Kinetic energy projectiles, when used properly, are less likely to result in death or serious physical injury and can be used in an attempt to de-escalate a potentially deadly situation.

## *Control Devices and Techniques*

---

### 308.8.1 DEPLOYMENT AND USE

Only department-approved kinetic energy munitions shall be carried and deployed. Approved munitions may be used to compel an individual to cease his/her actions when such munitions present a reasonable option.

Deputies are not required or compelled to use approved munitions in lieu of other reasonable tactics if the involved deputy determines that deployment of these munitions cannot be done safely. The safety of hostages, innocent persons and deputies takes priority over the safety of subjects engaged in criminal or suicidal behavior.

Circumstances appropriate for deployment include, but are not limited to, situations in which:

- (a) The suspect is armed with a weapon and the tactical circumstances allow for the safe application of approved munitions.
- (b) The suspect has made credible threats to harm him/herself or others.
- (c) The suspect is engaged in riotous behavior or is throwing rocks, bottles or other dangerous projectiles at people and/or deputies.
- (d) There is probable cause to believe that the suspect has already committed a crime of violence and is refusing to comply with lawful orders.

### 308.8.2 DEPLOYMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Before discharging projectiles, the deputy should consider such factors as:

- (a) Distance and angle to target.
- (b) Type of munitions employed.
- (c) Type and thickness of subject's clothing.
- (d) The subject's proximity to others.
- (e) The location of the subject.
- (f) Whether the subject's actions dictate the need for an immediate response and the use of control devices appears appropriate.

A verbal warning of the intended use of the device should precede its application, unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of deputies or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to give the individual a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply and to warn other deputies and individuals that the device is being deployed.

Deputies should keep in mind the manufacturer's recommendations and their training regarding effective distances and target areas. However, deputies are not restricted solely to use according to manufacturer recommendations. Each situation must be evaluated on the totality of circumstances at the time of deployment.

The need to immediately incapacitate the subject must be weighed against the risk of causing serious injury or death. The head and neck should not be intentionally targeted, except when the

## *Control Devices and Techniques*

---

deputy reasonably believes the suspect poses an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death to the deputy or others.

### **308.8.3 SAFETY PROCEDURES**

Shotguns specifically designated for use with kinetic energy projectiles will be specially marked in a manner that makes them readily identifiable as such.

Less lethal shotguns shall not have lethal rounds loaded or fired from designated shotguns.

Deputies will inspect the shotgun and projectiles at the beginning of each shift to ensure that the shotgun is in proper working order and the projectiles are of the approved type and appear to be free from defects.

When it is not deployed, the shotgun will be properly secured and may be stored in the vehicle while on duty. When deploying the kinetic energy projectile shotgun, the deputy shall visually inspect the kinetic energy projectiles to ensure that conventional ammunition is not being loaded into the shotgun. After a patrol shift is completed, the less lethal shotgun will be secured in accordance with existing department policies regarding storage of firearms.

### **308.9 TRAINING FOR CONTROL DEVICES**

The Administrative Sergeant will work with approved trainers and department managers to ensure that all personnel who are authorized to carry a control device have been properly trained and certified to carry the specific control device and are retrained or recertified as necessary.

- (a) Proficiency training shall be monitored and documented by a certified, control-device weapons or tactics instructor.
- (b) All training and proficiency for control devices will be documented in the deputy's training/personnel file in the business office.
- (c) Deputies who fail to demonstrate proficiency with the control device or knowledge of this agency's Use of Force Policy will be provided remedial training. If a deputy cannot demonstrate proficiency with a control device or knowledge of this agency's Use of Force Policy after remedial training, the deputy will be restricted from carrying the control device and may be subject to discipline.

### **308.10 REPORTING USE OF CONTROL DEVICES AND TECHNIQUES**

Any application of a control device or technique listed in this policy shall be documented in the related incident report and reported pursuant to the Use of Force Policy.

## Electronic Control Device ("TASER") Guidelines

### 309.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the issuance and use of TASER devices.

### 309.2 POLICY

The TASER® device is intended to control a violent or potentially violent individual, while minimizing the risk of serious injury. The appropriate use of such a device should result in fewer serious injuries to deputies and suspects.

### 309.3 ISSUANCE AND CARRYING TASER DEVICES

Only members who have successfully completed department-approved training may be issued and carry the TASER device.

TASER devices are issued for use during a member's current assignment. Those leaving a particular assignment may be required to return the device to the department's inventory.

Deputies shall only use the TASER device and cartridges that have been issued by the Department. Uniformed deputies who have been issued the TASER device shall wear the device in an approved holster on their person. Non-uniformed deputies may secure the TASER device in the driver's compartment of their vehicle.

Members carrying the TASER device should perform a spark test on the unit prior to every shift.

When carried while in uniform deputies shall carry the TASER device in a weak-side holster on the side opposite the duty weapon.

- (a) All TASER devices shall be clearly and distinctly marked to differentiate them from the duty weapon and any other device.
- (b) Whenever practicable, deputies should carry two or more cartridges on their person when carrying the TASER device.
- (c) Deputies shall be responsible for ensuring that their issued TASER device is properly maintained and in good working order.
- (d) Deputies should not hold both a firearm and the TASER device at the same time.

### 309.4 VERBAL AND VISUAL WARNINGS

A verbal warning of the intended use of the TASER device should precede its application, unless it would otherwise endanger the safety of deputies or when it is not practicable due to the circumstances. The purpose of the warning is to:

- (a) Provide the individual with a reasonable opportunity to voluntarily comply.
- (b) Provide other deputies and individuals with a warning that the TASER device may be deployed.

## *Electronic Control Device ("TASER") Guidelines*

---

If, after a verbal warning, an individual is unwilling to voluntarily comply with a deputy's lawful orders and it appears both reasonable and feasible under the circumstances, the deputy may, but is not required to, display the electrical arc (provided that a cartridge has not been loaded into the device), or the laser in a further attempt to gain compliance prior to the application of the TASER device. The aiming laser should never be intentionally directed into the eyes of another as it may permanently impair his/her vision.

The fact that a verbal or other warning was given or the reasons it was not given shall be documented by the deputy deploying the TASER device in the related report.

### 309.4.1 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE DEVICE

If, after a single application of the ECD, a deputy is still unable to gain compliance from an individual and circumstances allow, the deputy should consider whether or not the probes or darts are making proper contact, or if the use of the ECD is limiting the ability of the individual to comply, or if other options or tactics may be more appropriate. This however, does not preclude any deputy from applying multiple applications of the ECD, if appropriate.

### 309.4.2 REPORT OF USE

All ECD discharges shall be documented in the related arrest/crime report. The deputy must be able to articulate a reasonable belief that other available options appeared ineffective, impractical, or would have presented a greater danger to the deputy or others. Accidental discharges of an ECD cartridge will also be documented on a departmental information report form. Any report documenting the discharge of an ECD cartridge will include the cartridge's serial number and an explanation of the circumstances surrounding the discharge. A supervisor shall review the report and consult, as needed, the department's Use of Force advisor for any issues regarding the discharge of an ECD. The responsible deputy shall include the serial number of the deployed ECD in the applicable report. The onboard ECD memory will be downloaded through the dataport, and saved with the related arrest/crime report.

### 309.4.3 MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS OF THE ECD DEVICE

If the first application of the ECD device appears to be ineffective in gaining control of an individual and if circumstances allow, the deputy should consider the following before additional applications of the ECD device:

- (a) Whether the probes or darts are making proper contact.
- (b) Whether the application of the ECD device is interfering with the ability of the individual to comply.
- (c) Whether verbal commands, other options or tactics may be more effective.

These factors, however, shall not preclude any deputy from deploying multiple, reasonable applications of the ECD device on an individual.

## *Electronic Control Device ("TASER") Guidelines*

---

### **309.5 USE OF THE TASER DEVICE**

The TASER device has limitations and restrictions requiring consideration before its use. The TASER device should only be used when its operator can safely approach the subject within the operational range of the device. Although the TASER device is generally effective in controlling most individuals, deputies should be aware that the device may not achieve the intended results and be prepared with other options.

#### **309.5.1 DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

The TASER device may be deployed against an animal as part of a plan to deal with a potentially dangerous animal, such as a dog, if the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

### **309.6 DOCUMENTATION**

In addition to the initial department-approved training required to carry and use an ECD, any personnel who have not carried an ECD as a part of their assignment for a period of six months or more shall be recertified by a department approved ECD instructor prior to again carrying or using the device. A reassessment of a deputy's knowledge and/or practical skill may be required at any time if deemed appropriate by the Training Manager. The Training Manager should ensure that all training includes the following:

- a) A review of this policy.
- b) A review of the Use of Force Policy § 300.
- c) Target area considerations, to include techniques or options to reduce the intentional application of probes near the head, neck, chest and groin.
- d) De-escalation techniques.

## Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths

### 310.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To establish policy and procedures for the investigation of an incident in which a person is injured as the result of a deputy or an officer shooting or other application of deadly force. The intent of this policy is to ensure that such incidents be investigated in a fair and impartial manner. This policy shall be applied in a manner that is consistent with Policy § 302 (Deadly Force Review)

Nothing in this policy is intended to increase, modify, or in any way affect the current legal standards nor shall any deviation from these guidelines be considered a breach of any legal standard.

### 310.2 TYPES OF INVESTIGATIONS

Officer-involved shootings involve several separate investigations. The investigations may include:

- (a) A criminal investigation of the incident by the agency having jurisdiction where the incident occurred. This department may relinquish its criminal investigation to an outside agency with the approval of the Sheriff.
- (b) A criminal investigation of the involved officer(s) conducted by an outside agency
- (c) A civil investigation to determine potential liability conducted by the involved officer's agency
- (d) An administrative investigation conducted by the involved officer's agency, to determine if there were any violations of department policy

### 310.3 JURISDICTION

Jurisdiction is determined by the location of the shooting and the agency employing the involved officer(s). The following scenarios outline the jurisdictional responsibilities for investigating officer-involved shootings:

#### 310.3.1 MERCED COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE DEPUTY WITHIN THIS JURISDICTION

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is responsible for the criminal investigations of both the suspect's actions and the deputy's actions, the civil investigation, and the administrative investigation. A joint criminal investigation of the officer-involved shooting may be conducted by the District Attorney's Office at its discretion.

#### 310.3.2 ALLIED AGENCY'S OFFICER WITHIN THIS JURISDICTION

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is responsible for the criminal investigations of both the suspect's actions and the officer(s)' actions. A joint criminal investigation of the officer-involved shooting may be conducted by the District Attorney's Office at its discretion. The officer's employing agency will be responsible for any civil and/or administrative investigation(s).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths*

---

### 310.3.3 MERCED COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE DEPUTY IN ANOTHER JURISDICTION

The agency where the incident occurred has criminal jurisdiction and is responsible for the criminal investigation of the incident. That agency may relinquish its criminal investigation of the suspect(s) to another agency. The Merced County Sheriff's Office will conduct timely civil and/or administrative investigations.

### 310.3.4 INVESTIGATION RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

The following table identifies the possible scenarios and responsibilities for the investigation of officer-involved shootings:

	<b>Criminal Investigation of Suspect(s)</b>	<b>Criminal Investigation of Officer(s)</b>	<b>Civil Investigation</b>	<b>Administrative Investigation</b>
<b>MCSO Deputy in This Jurisdiction</b>	MCSO Investigators	MCSO Investigators and District Attorney's Office (discretionary)	MCSO Civil Liability Team	MCSO Internal Affairs Investigator
<b>Allied Agency's Officer in This Jurisdiction</b>	MCSO Investigators	MCSO Investigators and District Attorney's Office (discretionary)	Involved Officer's Department	Involved Officer's Department
<b>MCSO Deputy in Another Jurisdiction</b>	Agency where incident occurred	Decision made by agency where incident occurred	MCSO Civil Liability Team	MCSO Internal Affairs Investigator

### 310.4 INVESTIGATION PROCESS

The following procedures are guidelines used in the investigation of an officer-involved shooting or death.

#### 310.4.1 UNINVOLVED DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival at the scene of an officer-involved shooting, the first uninvolved MCSO deputy will be the deputy-in-charge and will assume the responsibilities of a supervisor until properly relieved. This deputy should, as appropriate:

- (a) Secure the scene and identify and eliminate hazards for all those involved.
- (b) Take reasonable steps to obtain emergency medical attention for injured individuals.
- (c) Request additional resources from the Department or other agencies.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths*

---

- (d) Coordinate a perimeter or pursuit of suspects.
- (e) Check for injured persons and evacuate as needed.
- (f) Brief the supervisor upon arrival.

### 310.4.2 AREA LIEUTENANT RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon learning of an officer-involved shooting or death, the Area Lieutenant shall be responsible for coordinating all aspects of the incident until he/she is relieved by the Operations Captain or Undersheriff.

All outside inquiries about the incident shall be directed to the Public Information Deputy.

### 310.4.3 NOTIFICATIONS

The following person(s) shall be notified as soon as practical:

- Sheriff's Administration
- Investigations Supervisor
- Psychological/Peer support personnel
- Coroner (if necessary)
- Deputy Representative (if requested)

All outside inquiries about the incident shall be directed to the Incident Commander, the on-scene supervisor, or the Public Information Officer.

### 310.4.4 INVOLVED OFFICERS

Once involved deputy(s)/officer(s) have arrived at the station or other location for an interview, the appropriate Division Captain or supervisor should admonish each deputy that the incident shall not be discussed except with authorized personnel or representatives. The following shall be considered for the involved deputy:

- (a) Any request for department or legal representation will be accommodated; however, no involved deputies/officers shall be permitted to meet collectively or in a group with any representative or any attorney prior to providing a formal interview or report (Government Code § 3303(i)). .
- (b) Discussions with licensed attorneys will be considered privileged as attorney-client communications.
- (c) Discussions with departmental representatives (e.g., employee association) will be privileged only as to the discussion of non-criminal information. A psychotherapist shall be provided by the Department to each involved deputy/officer, or any deputy upon request.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths*

---

- (d)
  - 1. Interviews with a licensed psychotherapist will be considered privileged and will not be disclosed except to the extent that the deputy is or is not fit for return to duty.
  - 2. An interview or session with a licensed psychotherapist may take place prior to the involved deputy providing a formal interview or report, but the involved deputies shall not be permitted to consult or meet collectively or in a group with a licensed psychotherapist prior to providing a formal interview or report.
- (e) Although the Department will honor the sensitivity of communications with peer counselors, there is no legal privilege to such and counselors are cautioned not to discuss the facts of any incident with an involved or witness deputy/officer.

Care should be taken to preserve the integrity of any physical evidence present on the deputy's equipment or clothing, such as blood or fingerprints, until investigators or lab personnel can properly retrieve it.

Administration and investigators shall make reasonable accommodations to the deputy's/officer's physical and emotional needs (Government Code § 3303(d)).

Each involved deputy shall be given reasonable paid administrative leave following an officer-involved shooting and it shall be the responsibility of the appropriate captain or supervisor to make schedule adjustments to accommodate such leave.

#### 310.4.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival at the scene, the first uninvolved MCSO supervisor should ensure completion of the duties as outlined above, plus:

- (a) Attempt to obtain a brief overview of the situation from any uninvolved officers.
  - 1. In the event that there are no uninvolved officers who can supply adequate overview, the supervisor should attempt to obtain a brief voluntary overview from one involved officer.
- (b) If necessary, the supervisor may administratively order any MCSO deputy to immediately provide public safety information necessary to secure the scene, identify injured parties and pursue suspects.
  - 1. Public safety information shall be limited to such things as outstanding suspect information, number and direction of any shots fired, perimeter of the incident scene, identity of known or potential witnesses and any other pertinent information.
  - 2. The initial on-scene supervisor should not attempt to order any involved officer to provide any information other than public safety information.
- (c) Provide all available information to the Patrol Lieutenant and Dispatch. If feasible, sensitive information should be communicated over secure networks.
- (d) Take command of and secure the incident scene with additional MCSO members until properly relieved by another supervisor or other assigned personnel or investigator.

## *Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths*

---

- (e) As soon as practicable, ensure that involved officers are transported (separately, if feasible) to a suitable location for further direction.
  - 1. Each involved MCSO deputy should be given an administrative order not to discuss the incident with other involved officers or MCSO members pending further direction from a supervisor.
  - 2. When an involved officer's weapon is taken or left at the scene for other than officer-safety reasons (e.g., evidence), ensure that he/she is provided with a comparable replacement weapon or transported by other deputies.

### **310.5 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION**

In addition to all other investigations associated with an officer-involved shooting or death, this department will conduct an internal administrative investigation of MCSO deputies to determine conformance with department policy. The investigation will be conducted under the supervision of the Internal Affairs Investigator and will be considered a confidential deputy personnel file.

Interviews of members shall be subject to department policies and applicable laws (see the Personnel Complaints Policy).

- (a) Any deputy involved in a shooting or death may be requested or administratively compelled to provide a blood sample for alcohol/drug screening. Absent consent from the deputy, such compelled samples and the results of any such testing shall not be disclosed to any criminal investigative agency.
- (b) If any deputy has voluntarily elected to provide a statement to criminal investigators, the assigned administrative investigator should review that statement before proceeding with any further interview of that involved deputy.
  - 1. If a further interview of the deputy is deemed necessary to determine policy compliance, care should be taken to limit the inquiry to new areas with minimal, if any, duplication of questions addressed in the voluntary statement. The involved deputy shall be provided with a copy of his/her prior statement before proceeding with any subsequent interviews.
- (c) In the event that an involved deputy has elected to not provide criminal investigators with a voluntary statement, the assigned administrative investigator shall conduct an administrative interview to determine all relevant information.
  - 1. Although this interview should not be unreasonably delayed, care should be taken to ensure that the deputy's physical and psychological needs have been addressed before commencing the interview.
  - 2. If requested, the deputy shall have the opportunity to select an uninvolved representative to be present during the interview. However, in order to maintain the integrity of each individual deputy's statement, involved deputies shall not consult or meet with a representative or attorney collectively or in groups prior to being interviewed (Government Code § 3303(i)).
  - 3. Administrative interviews should be recorded by the investigator. The deputy may also record the interview (Government Code § 3303(g)).

## *Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths*

---

4. The deputy shall be informed of the nature of the investigation. If a deputy refuses to answer questions, he/she should be given his/her *Lybarger* or *Garrity* rights and ordered to provide full and truthful answers to all questions. The deputy shall be informed that the interview will be for administrative purposes only and that the statement cannot be used criminally.
5. The Internal Affairs Investigator shall compile all relevant information and reports necessary for the Department to determine compliance with applicable policies.
6. Regardless of whether the use of force is an issue in the case, the completed administrative investigation shall be submitted to the Use of Force Review Board, which will restrict its findings as to whether there was compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
7. Any other indications of potential policy violations shall be determined in accordance with standard disciplinary procedures.

### **310.6 AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Any officer involved in a shooting or death will be permitted to review available Mobile, body-worn video, or other video or audio recordings prior to providing a recorded statement or completing reports. This pertains to both administrative and criminal investigations.

Before the deputy can view the video from the body-worn camera, the device must be secured by an on scene supervisor. The audio/video file shall be uploaded to the Evidence.com account. The deputy will be permitted to review the audio/video file prior to any interview with their representative/attorney if they wish.

Upon request, non-law enforcement witnesses who are able to verify their presence and their ability to contemporaneously perceive events at the scene of an incident may also be permitted to review available MAV, body-worn video, or other video or audio recordings with approval of assigned investigators or a supervisor.

Any MAV, body-worn and other known video or audio recordings of an incident should not be publicly released during an ongoing investigation without consulting the prosecuting attorney or County Counsel's Office, as appropriate.

### **310.7 CIVIL LIABILITY RESPONSE**

A member of this department may be assigned to work exclusively under the direction of the legal counsel for the Department to assist in the preparation of materials deemed necessary in anticipation of potential civil litigation.

All materials generated in this capacity shall be considered attorney work product and may not be used for any other purpose. The civil liability response is not intended to interfere with any other investigation but shall be given reasonable access to all other investigations.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths*

---

### **310.8 DEBRIEFING**

Following an officer-involved shooting or death, the Merced County Sheriff's Office should conduct both a critical incident/stress debriefing and a tactical debriefing.

#### **310.8.1 CRITICAL INCIDENT/STRESS DEBRIEFING**

A critical incident/stress debriefing should occur as soon as practicable. The Administration Captain is responsible for organizing the debriefing. Notes and recorded statements should not be taken because the sole purpose of the debriefing is to help mitigate the stress-related effects of a traumatic event.

The debriefing is not part of any investigative process. Care should be taken not to release or repeat any communication made during a debriefing unless otherwise authorized by policy, law or a valid court order.

Attendance at the debriefing shall only include those members of the Department directly involved in the incident, which can include support personnel (e.g., [dispatchers, other civilian personnel]). Family or other support personnel may attend with the concurrence of those involved in the incident. The debriefing shall be closed to the public and should be closed to all other members of the Department, including supervisory and Internal Affairs Investigator personnel.

#### **310.8.2 TACTICAL DEBRIEFING**

A tactical debriefing should take place to identify any training or areas of policy that need improvement. The Sheriff should identify the appropriate participants. This debriefing should not be conducted until all involved members have provided recorded or formal statements to criminal and/or administrative investigators.

### **310.9 MEDIA RELATIONS**

Any media release shall be prepared with input and concurrence from the supervisor and department representative responsible for each phase of the investigation. Releases will be available to the Patrol Lieutenant, Investigation Captain and Public Information Officer in the event of inquiries from the media.

The Department shall not subject any involved MCSO deputy to visits by the media (Government Code § 3303(e)). No involved MCSO deputy shall make any comment to the media unless he/she is authorized by the Sheriff. Department members receiving inquiries regarding officer-involved shootings or deaths occurring in other jurisdictions shall refrain from public comment and will direct those inquiries to the agency having jurisdiction and primary responsibility for the investigation.

### **310.10 REPORTING**

If the death of an individual occurs in the Merced County Sheriff's Office jurisdiction and qualifies to be reported to the state as a justifiable homicide or an in-custody death, the Administrative Captain will ensure that the Records Supervisor is provided with enough information to meet the reporting requirements (Penal Code § 196; Penal Code § 13022; Government Code § 12525).

# Firearms

## 312.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for issuing firearms, the safe and legal carrying of firearms, firearms maintenance and firearms training.

This policy does not apply to issues related to the use of firearms that are addressed in the Use of Force or Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths policies.

This policy only applies to those members who are authorized to carry firearms.

### 312.1.1 CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS

(a) Correctional Officers are prohibited from carrying any concealed firearms off-duty unless they possess a valid CCW permit and have served as a Correctional Officer for this department for 1 (one) year and must comply with the requirements of this policy section 312.2.3.

(b) Correctional Officers are prohibited from purchasing or selling any firearm not specified in the California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms approved handgun roster. (California Penal Code section 12125).

(c) Correctional Officers are not exempted from the statutory 10-day waiting period when purchasing or transferring firearms (Penal Code section 12076, et seq).

## 312.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will equip its members with firearms to address the risks posed to the public and [department/office] members by violent and sometimes well-armed persons. The [Department/Office] will ensure firearms are appropriate and in good working order and that relevant training is provided as resources allow.

### 312.2.1 PRIMARY AND ALTERNATE DUTY WEAPONS

The authorized departmental-issued handguns are:

1. Glock Model 21. This is the primary handgun that first responders (i.e. patrol and court deputies) must carry.
2. Glock Model 30 or 30S. This is an alternative duty firearm which may be carried by those deputies whose primary duty is not patrol.

#### Alternative Duty Weapons

1. The 1911 style .45 caliber semi automatic pistol may be carried in place of the department issued pistol for those employees who are listed in penal code sections 830.1 or 830.6.
2. Deputies will be responsible for the purchase of the firearm, magazines, holster(s) and magazine pouches. The department will not be responsible to purchase the firearm and required equipment nor will the department pay for any loss or damage to the pistol or any of the support equipment. The cost of purchasing the weapon and all required accessories will be the sole responsibility of the eligible employee.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Firearms

---

Deputies are highly encouraged to speak with the Range Supervisor prior to purchasing a 1911 pistol to make sure the make and model will be accepted for on duty use. Before the pistol will be authorized to carry, the requesting deputy will complete a request to carry form. The form shall be filled out in its entirety and submitted to the Range Supervisor for review. The request to carry form can be located on the Sheriff's Office "X" drive, in the file folder titled "Range". After review and acceptance by the Range Supervisor, the employee will be contacted and transition training will be scheduled.

### Required 1911 .45 Pistol Specifications:

1. The 1911 Style .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol shall be of modern design (1911-A1 style) made by a reputable manufacturer (e.g., Colt, Smith & Wesson, Springfield, Sig-Sauer, Wilson, etc.).
2. Single Action.
3. Five (5) inch barrel length.
4. The trigger pull shall be no less than 4.5 pounds.
5. Night Sights approved by the Range Supervisor.
6. Ambidextrous thumb safety.
7. Must be adaptable to department approved mountable pistol flashlight.

### Pistol Mounted Light :

Uniformed deputies opting to carry this alternate firearm must have the firearm mounted with a department approved pistol flashlight while working patrol, courts or any other uniformed first responder capacity.

The department issued TLR-1 light may be used and mounted on the 1911 style pistol.

The alternative pistol light authorized is the Surefire brand X300 or approved Surefire variant weapon light.

For pistols that do not have an integral frame rail to mount the pistol light, the Surefire brand model MR07 may be used to satisfy the mountable pistol flashlight requirement.

Non-uniformed deputies (i.e. detectives, administrative staff) who are generally not serving in a first responder role are not required to equip this firearm with the pistol flashlight. The pistol must still be capable of flashlight mounting if they are conducting a planned enforcement activity or going to be working a uniform assignment.

A "Combat Commander" 4 ¼ length barrel 1911 style pistol may be used in place of a full size pistol in assignments such as detectives and administration. This will only be authorized with prior approval from the firearms training division.

### Magazine Requirements:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Firearms*

---

1. Wilson Combat model "47D" 8 round magazines or other approved Wilson Combat 8 round and/or 10 round magazines. Magazines can be either stainless or blued in color.
2. Single Stack. Some 1911 models use staggered round magazines. 1911 style pistols that use staggered hi-capacity magazines may be used with prior Range Supervisor approval.

### Number and type of magazines:

Uniformed deputies are required to carry one magazine in the pistol with a maximum eight (8) rounds capacity and are required to carry a minimum of three (3) additional magazines with a maximum eight (8) or ten (10) rounds capacity.

Non-uniformed deputies are required to carry one magazine in the pistol with a maximum eight (8) rounds capacity and are required to carry a minimum of one (1) additional magazine with a maximum eight (8) or ten (10) rounds capacity.

### Holster and Magazine Carriers:

The pistol holster and magazine carriers shall conform to the specifications of this firearm and be of good quality and made by a reputable manufacturer.

1. Uniformed deputies are required to have a Safariland model 6285 holster to accommodate the 1911 style pistol with a mounted weapon light.
2. Non-uniformed deputies such as detectives or administration shall use a Blackhawk CQC Serpa locking concealment style holster with a matte black finish.

### Inspection:

Prior to use of the alternate firearm on duty, the deputy must submit the firearm and all required accessories to the Range Supervisor for inspection and approval.

### Training and Qualification:

Prior to this alternate firearm on duty use, the deputy must successfully complete a transition course conducted by this agency. The nature and requirements of this firearms transition course will be determined by the Range Supervisor and is subject to change at the Range Supervisor's discretion. After the firearms transition course the deputy must show that he/she is proficient in the areas of perishable skills and safety operations related specifically for this type of weapon.

Once initially qualified, the deputy shall then be required to maintain his or her proficiency according to the Sheriff's Office's regularly required firearms qualification schedule.

### Eligibility:

Only non-probationary deputies are authorized to carry the 1911 Style .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol. Reserve deputies must have the recommendation of the range staff and have been employed for one year with satisfactory service.

### Maintenance & Modifications:

## *Firearms*

---

Each deputy shall be required to field strip and clean this pistol as needed and be in accordance with the maintenance standards provided by the Range Supervisor. Each deputy shall be responsible for promptly reporting any damage or malfunction of the firearm to his or her supervisor and the Rangemaster.

No modifications, including cosmetic changes shall be made to any pistol without prior written authorization from the Rangemaster or Armorer.

### 312.2.2 AUTHORIZED SECONDARY WEAPONS

Authorized employees desiring to carry a secondary weapon are subject to the following restrictions:

- (a) The weapon shall be of good quality and workmanship (e.g., Colt, Smith & Wesson, Browning, Sig-Sauer, etc.)
- (b) Only one secondary weapon may be carried at a time
- (c) The purchase of the weapon and ammunition shall be the responsibility of the deputy
- (d) The weapon shall be carried out of sight at all times and in such a manner as to prevent accidental cocking, discharge, or loss of physical control
- (e) The weapon shall be subject to inspection whenever deemed necessary
- (f) Ammunition shall be the same as Department issue. If the caliber of the weapon is other than Department issue, the Sheriff shall approve ammunition
- (g) Personnel shall qualify with the secondary weapon under range supervision. Deputies must demonstrate their proficiency, safe handling and serviceability of the weapon.
- (h) Personnel shall provide written notice of the make, model, color, serial number, and caliber of a second weapon to the Range Supervisor.

### 312.2.3 AUTHORIZED OFF-DUTY FIREARMS

The carrying of firearms by sworn deputies while off duty is permitted by the Sheriff, but may be rescinded should circumstances dictate (e.g., administrative leave). Sworn deputies who choose to carry a firearm while off-duty, based on their authority as a peace officer, will be required to meet the following guidelines:

- (a) The weapon shall be of good quality and workmanship (e.g., Glock, Colt, Smith & Wesson, Browning, Sig-Sauer) and must be approved by the Range Supervisor.
- (b) The purchase of the weapon and ammunition shall be the responsibility of the deputy.
- (c) The weapon shall be carried concealed at all times and in such a manner as to prevent accidental cocking, discharge, or loss of physical control.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Firearms

---

- (d) If any member desires to use more than one weapon while off-duty, he/she may do so, as long as the deputy meets all the requirements set forth in this policy for each weapon used.
- (e) Deputies are responsible for ammunition for their personally owned weapons if the weapon caliber is a different than the department issued caliber.
- (f) When armed, whether on- or off-duty, deputies shall carry their badge and department identification.

#### 312.2.4 AMMUNITION

Deputies shall carry only department-authorized/issued ammunition while on duty.

#### 312.2.5 PISTOL MAINTENANCE

- (a) Primary responsibility for maintenance of duty pistols shall fall on the Range Supervisor or department authorized armorer.
- (b) The Range Supervisor shall designate personnel who are department authorized armorers.
- (c) Each deputy carrying a pistol shall be required to field strip and clean their assigned pistol as needed.
- (d) Each deputy shall be responsible for promptly reporting any damage or malfunction of an assigned pistol.
- (e) Each pistol shall be subject to inspection by a supervisor, the Rangemaster or Armorer at any time. If a pistol is found to be dirty, a memo will be put into the deputies training file stating the circumstances regarding the condition of the pistol. If a pattern develops, the deputy may be subject to retraining or disciplinary action in the event that retraining does not resolve the matter.
- (f) No modification shall be made to any pistol or department firearm without prior written authorization from the Range Supervisor or department authorized armorer.

### 312.3 AUTHORIZED FIREARMS, AMMUNITION AND OTHER WEAPONS

Members shall only use firearms that are issued or approved by the [Department/Office] and have been thoroughly inspected by the Rangemaster. Except in an emergency or as directed by a supervisor, no firearm shall be carried by a member who has not qualified with that firearm at an authorized [department/office] range.

All other weapons not provided by the [Department/Office], including, but not limited to, edged weapons, chemical or electronic weapons, impact weapons or any weapon prohibited or restricted by law or that is not covered elsewhere by [department/office] policy, may not be carried by members in the performance of their official duties without the express written authorization of the member's Captain. This exclusion does not apply to the carrying of a single folding pocketknife that is not otherwise prohibited by law.

## Firearms

---

### 312.3.1 SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- (a) Deputies shall not unnecessarily display or handle any firearm.
- (b) Deputies shall be governed by all rules and regulations pertaining to the use of the range and shall obey all orders issued by the Rangemaster. Deputies shall not dry fire or practice quick draws except under Rangemaster supervision.
- (c) Any member who discharges his/her weapon accidentally or intentionally, on or off-duty, except during training or recreational use, shall report to his/her supervisor as soon as circumstances permit.
- (d) Deputies shall not clean, repair, load or unload a firearm using clearing barrels
- (e) Shotguns or rifles removed from vehicles or equipment storage room shall be loaded and unloaded using a clearing barrel.
- (f) While on duty or present in a departmental facility, a deputy who is in possession of a duty firearm or other projectile-based weapon (duty pistol, back-up firearm, Taser, "bean-bag" shotgun, or long rifle), the weapon shall be secured in its respective carrier (holster or carrying case). The deputy shall not leave any such weapon unattended. For example, cased weapons shall not be left unattended in another room regardless of whether that room is locked unless the weapon is secured in a locked repository. Typically, department shotguns assigned to patrol stations do not have cases. These shotguns shall be carried with the chamber unloaded with the muzzle in an upwards position when not secured. When the shotgun is not in transit, it shall be secured in one of shotgun locking racks.
- (g) No one shall carry firearms into the jail section or any part thereof when securing or processing a prisoner, but shall place all firearms in a secured location. It shall be the responsibility of the releasing deputy to make sure that persons from outside agencies do not enter the jail section with any firearm.
- (h) Deputies shall not use any automatic weapon, heavy caliber rifles, noise/flash/diversion device, tear gas or other types of chemical weapon except with approval of a SWAT supervisor, SWAT Lieutenant, or SWAT Captain. SWAT team members are authorized to deploy such weapons with them and may deploy them if they can articulate the need for such. The SWAT team member must be currently trained in the use of the weapon, or munition prior to deployment.
- (i) Any weapon authorized by the department to be carried on or off duty that is found by the deputy to be malfunctioning or needing service shall not be carried and shall be promptly presented to the department Range Supervisor for inspection. Any weapon determined to be in need of service or repair during an inspection by the department Range Supervisor will be immediately removed from service. If the weapon is the deputy's primary duty weapon, a replacement weapon will be issued to the deputy until the duty weapon is again rendered serviceable.

## Firearms

---

### 312.3.2 STORAGE OF FIREARMS AT HOME

Deputies shall ensure that all firearms and ammunition are locked and secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control in a manner that will keep them inaccessible to children and irresponsible adults. Deputies shall store their weapons in their safe at home and remove department weapons from their personal vehicles and/or department issued vehicle. Deputies shall be aware that negligent storage of a firearm could result in criminal prosecution under Penal Code §25100 .

### 312.3.3 DEPARTMENT WEAPONS AND VEHICLES

Whenever a firearm or weapon is in a department vehicle (marked or unmarked) and regardless of whether the deputy is present in the vehicle, the deputy shall secure the weapon, at all times (unless the weapon is being deployed), in its respective weapons security device (shotgun/long rifle racks, trunk cable locks). No employee shall leave any department issued or personally owned firearm(s) in their assigned patrol car at the end of their shift. No employee shall store or leave any department issued or personally owned firearm(s) in any sheriff's department take home vehicle when they are off duty.

### 312.3.4 OTHER WEAPONS

Other duty weapons such as batons, pepper spray, knives, etc. shall be secured to the deputy's person at all times.

### 312.3.5 PATROL RIFLES

The authorized department-issued patrol rifle is the AR-15 series carbine weapon platform.

Members may deploy the patrol rifle in any circumstance where the member can articulate a reasonable expectation that the rifle may be needed. Examples of some general guidelines for deploying the patrol rifle may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Situations where the member reasonably anticipates an armed encounter.
- (b) When a member is faced with a situation that may require accurate and effective fire at long range.
- (c) Situations where a member reasonably expects the need to meet or exceed a suspect's firepower.
- (d) When a member reasonably believes that there may be a need to fire on a barricaded person or a person with a hostage.
- (e) When a member reasonably believes that a suspect may be wearing body armor.
- (f) When authorized or requested by a supervisor.
- (g) When needed to euthanize an animal.

## *Firearms*

---

When not deployed, the patrol rifle shall be properly secured in a locking weapons rack in the patrol vehicle with the chamber empty, magazine loaded and inserted into the magazine well, the bolt forward with the dust cover closed, the trigger pulled to release the hammer and the selector lever in the fire position (selector lever cannot be in the safe position with the hammer released).

### **312.4 FIREARMS QUALIFICATIONS**

All deputy sheriffs are required to qualify with their duty weapon and annually with their off-duty weapon and secondary weapon on an approved range course. The Range Supervisor shall keep accurate records of qualifications, repairs, maintenance, training or as directed by the Operations Captain. In addition to regular qualification schedules, the Range Supervisor shall be responsible for providing all sworn personnel with annual practical training designed to simulate field situations. At least annually, all personnel carrying a firearm will receive training on the department Use of Force policy and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding.

#### **312.4.1 NON QUALIFICATION**

If any deputy is unable to qualify for any reason, including injury, illness, duty status, or scheduling conflict, that deputy shall submit a memorandum to his or her immediate supervisor prior to the range date.

Members who repeatedly fail to qualify will be relieved from field assignment and appropriate disciplinary action may follow.

Sworn members who fail to qualify on their first shooting attempt shall be provided remedial training until proficiency is demonstrated and will be subject to the following requirements:

- (a) Additional range assignments may be required until consistent weapon proficiency is demonstrated.

#### **312.4.2 HOLSTERS**

Only [department/office]-approved holsters shall be used and worn by members. Members shall periodically inspect their holsters to make sure they are serviceable and provide the proper security and retention of the handgun.

#### **312.4.3 TACTICAL LIGHTS**

Tactical lights may only be installed on a firearm carried on- or off-duty after they have been examined and approved by the Range Supervisor. The approved on-duty tactical weapon light for the department issued pistol is the Streamlight TLR-1 weapon light. Other weapons lights may be utilized but only after inspection, qualification, and training with approval of the Range Supervisor.

Once the approved tactical lights have been properly installed on any firearm, the member shall qualify with the firearm to ensure proper functionality and sighting of the firearm prior to carrying

## Firearms

---

it. Tactical lights on personally owned rifles must be approved by the Range Supervisor prior to use and deployment.

### 312.4.4 OPTICS OR LASER SIGHTS

Optics with no magnification may only be installed on a rifle or personal firearm carried on- or off-duty after they have been examined and approved by the Range Supervisor. Any approved sight shall only be installed in strict accordance with manufacturer specifications. Once approved sights have been properly installed on any firearm, the member shall qualify with the firearm to ensure proper functionality and sighting of the firearm prior to carrying it. The optic must be able to be used with fixed or iron sights that permit co-witness application should the optic fail.

Except in an approved training situation, a member may only sight in on a target when the member would otherwise be justified in pointing a firearm at the target.

Laser sights are not approved except for SWAT Team members who have been trained.

### 312.5 SAFE HANDLING, INSPECTION AND STORAGE

Members shall maintain the highest level of safety when handling firearms and shall consider the following:

- (a) This includes utilizing all locking devices including cable locks when the firearm is being secured and the deputy is not near their vehicle for extended periods while participating at a security event.

#### 312.5.1 ALCOHOL AND DRUGS

Firearms shall not be carried by any member, either on- or off-duty, who has consumed an amount of an alcoholic beverage, or has taken any drugs or medication, has taken any combination thereof that would tend to adversely affect the member's senses or judgment.

#### 312.5.2 STORAGE AT HOME

Members shall ensure that all firearms and ammunition are locked and secured while in their homes, vehicles or any other area under their control, and in a manner that will keep them inaccessible to children and others who should not have access. Members shall not permit [department/office]-issued firearms to be handled by anyone not authorized by the [Department/Office] to do so. Members should be aware that negligent storage of a firearm could result in civil and criminal liability (Penal Code § 25100).

#### 312.5.3 INSPECTION AND STORAGE

Deputies shall inspect their issued pistol and re-inspect their pistol upon access from storage or possession by another person. Shotguns and rifles shall be inspected at the beginning of the shift by the member to whom the weapon is issued. The member shall ensure that the firearm is carried in the proper condition and loaded with approved ammunition. Inspection of the shotgun and rifle shall be done while standing outside of the patrol vehicle. All firearms shall be pointed in a safe direction or into clearing barrels.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Firearms

---

Firearms may be safely stored in lockers or another approved location at the end of the shift.

Handguns may remain loaded if they are secured in an appropriate holster. Shotguns and rifles shall be unloaded in a safe manner outside the building and then stored in the appropriate equipment storage room.

### 312.5.4 STORAGE IN VEHICLES

When leaving a handgun in an unattended vehicle, members shall ensure that it is locked in the trunk, or in a locked container which is placed out of view, or in a locked container that is permanently affixed to the vehicle's interior and not in plain view (Penal Code § 16850; Penal Code § 25140; Penal Code § 25452).

If the vehicle does not have a trunk or a locked container, then the firearm should be locked within the center utility console that can be locked with a padlock, keylock, combination lock or other similar locking device (Penal Code § 25140).

Deputies are exempt from these requirements during circumstances requiring immediate aid or action in the course of official duties (Penal Code § 25140).

### 312.6 FIREARM DISCHARGE

Except during training or recreational use, any member who discharges a firearm intentionally or unintentionally, on- or off-duty, shall report to his/her supervisor as soon as circumstances permit. If the discharge results in injury or death to another person, additional statements and reports shall be made in accordance with the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy. If a firearm was discharged as a use of force, the involved member shall adhere to the additional reporting requirements set forth in the Use of Force Policy.

In all other cases, written reports shall be made as follows:

- (a) If on-duty at the time of the incident, the member shall report to his/her immediate supervisor or provide a recorded statement to investigators prior to the end of shift, unless otherwise directed.
- (b) If off-duty at the time of the incident, a written report shall be submitted or recorded statement provided no later than the end of the next regularly scheduled shift, unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.
- (c) The employees supervisor will make notification to their division Lieutenant.

#### 312.6.1 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS

Members are authorized to use firearms to stop an animal in circumstances where the animal reasonably appears to pose an imminent threat to human safety and alternative methods are not reasonably available or would likely be ineffective.

In circumstances where there is sufficient advance notice that a potentially dangerous animal may be encountered, [department/office] members should develop reasonable contingency plans for dealing with the animal (e.g., fire extinguisher, TASER® device, oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray, animal control officer). Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any member from shooting

## *Firearms*

---

a dangerous animal if circumstances reasonably dictate that a contingency plan has failed or becomes impractical.

### **312.6.2 INJURED ANIMALS**

With the approval of a supervisor, a member may euthanize an animal that is so badly injured that human compassion requires its removal from further suffering and where other dispositions are impractical (Penal Code § 597.1(e)).

Injured animals (with the exception of dogs and cats) may only be euthanized after a reasonable search to locate the owner has been made (Penal Code § 597.1(b)). Injured dogs and cats found without their owners shall be taken to an appropriate veterinarian for determination of whether they should be treated or humanely destroyed.

### **312.6.3 WARNING AND OTHER SHOTS**

Generally, warning shots or shots fired for the purpose of summoning aid are discouraged and may not be discharged unless the member reasonably believes that they appear necessary, effective and reasonably safe.

## **312.7 RANGEMASTER DUTIES**

The range will be under the exclusive control of the Rangemaster. All members attending will follow the directions of the Rangemaster. The Rangemaster will maintain a roster of all members attending the range and will submit the roster to the Training Manager after each range date. Failure of any member to sign in and out with the Rangemaster may result in non-qualification.

The range shall remain operational and accessible to [Department/Office] members during hours established by the [Department/Office].

The Rangemaster has the responsibility of making periodic inspection, at least once a year, of all duty firearms carried by members of this [department/office] to verify proper operation. The Rangemaster has the authority to deem any [department/office]-issued or personally owned firearm unfit for service. The member will be responsible for all repairs to his/her personally owned firearm and it will not be returned to service until inspected by the Rangemaster.

The Rangemaster has the responsibility for ensuring each member meets the minimum requirements during training shoots and, on at least a yearly basis, can demonstrate proficiency in the care, cleaning and safety of all firearms the member is authorized to carry.

The Rangemaster shall complete and submit to the Training Manager documentation of the training courses provided. Documentation shall include the qualifications of each instructor who provides the training, a description of the training provided and, on a form that has been approved by the [Department/Office], a list of each member who completes the training. The Rangemaster should keep accurate records of all training shoots, qualifications, repairs, maintenance or other records as directed by the Training Manager.

## Firearms

---

### **312.8 FLYING WHILE ARMED**

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has imposed rules governing law enforcement officers flying armed on commercial aircraft. The following requirements apply to deputies who intend to be armed while flying on a commercial air carrier or flights where screening is conducted (49 CFR 1544.219):

- (a) Deputies wishing to fly while armed must be flying in an official capacity, not for vacation or pleasure, and must have a need to have the firearm accessible, as determined by the [Department/Office] based on the law and published TSA rules.
- (b) Deputies must carry their Merced County Sheriff's Office identification card, bearing the deputy's name, a full-face photograph, identification number, the deputy's signature and the signature of the Sheriff or the official seal of the [Department/Office] and must present this identification to airline officials when requested. The deputy should also carry the standard photo identification needed for passenger screening by airline and TSA officials (e.g., driver license, passport).
- (c) The Merced County Sheriff's Office must submit a National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS) message prior to the deputy's travel. If approved, TSA will send the Merced County Sheriff's Office an NLETS message containing a unique alphanumeric identifier. The deputy must present the message on the day of travel to airport personnel as authorization to travel while armed.
- (d) An official letter signed by the Sheriff authorizing armed travel may also accompany the deputy. The letter should outline the deputy's need to fly armed, detail his/her itinerary, and include that the deputy has completed the mandatory TSA training for a law enforcement officer flying while armed.
- (e) Deputies must have completed the mandated TSA security training covering deputies flying while armed. The training shall be given by the [department/office]-appointed instructor.
- (f) It is the deputy's responsibility to notify the air carrier in advance of the intended armed travel. This notification should be accomplished by early check-in at the carrier's check-in counter.
- (g) Any deputy flying while armed should discreetly contact the flight crew prior to take-off and notify them of his/her assigned seat.
- (h) Discretion must be used to avoid alarming passengers or crew by displaying a firearm. The deputy must keep the firearm concealed on his/her person at all times. Firearms are not permitted in carry-on luggage and may not be stored in an overhead compartment.
- (i) Deputies should try to resolve any problems associated with flying armed through the flight captain, ground security manager, TSA representative or other management representative of the air carrier.
- (j) Deputies shall not consume alcoholic beverages while aboard an aircraft, or within eight hours prior to boarding an aircraft.

## Firearms

---

### **312.9 ALTERNATIVE FIREARMS CARRY - NOT IN FIRST RESPONDER ROLE**

The purpose of this policy is to allow members of the department to carry other Glock Model pistols, 1911 style pistols, or other department issued pistols in certain assignments while not in a first responder assignment/position. When available, the department may issue other department owned pistols for those employees.

The decision to carry alternative pistols is the deputy's choice and is not required. The decision should be based on their job description and current assignment (detectives, administration or undercover). This option is subject to the availability of these alternative firearms.

#### **312.9.1 COURT APPEARANCE AND FIREARMS**

Any deputy appearing in court for official department business is required to carry his/her department-issued firearm or approved alternative firearm. The deputy will carry the primary firearm associated with his/her current assignment.

#### **312.9.2 FIREARMS SALES**

All employees are prohibited from selling any firearm not specified in the California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms approved handgun roster to any person, unless the buyer is a California peace officer as defined by Penal Code §§ 830.1 and 830.2. Any exception to this requirement must be approved by the Sheriff.

### **312.10 CARRYING FIREARMS OUT OF STATE**

Qualified, active, full-time deputies of this [department/office] are authorized to carry a concealed firearm in all other states subject to the following conditions (18 USC § 926B):

- (a) The deputy shall carry his/her Merced County Sheriff's Office identification card whenever carrying such firearm.
- (b) The deputy is not the subject of any current disciplinary action.
- (c) The deputy may not be under the influence of alcohol or any other intoxicating or hallucinatory drug.
- (d) The deputy will remain subject to this and all other [department/office] policies (including qualifying and training).

Deputies are cautioned that individual states may enact local regulations that permit private persons or entities to prohibit or restrict the possession of concealed firearms on their property, or that prohibit or restrict the possession of firearms on any state or local government property, installation, building, base or park. Federal authority may not shield a deputy from arrest and prosecution in such locally restricted areas.

Active law enforcement officers from other states are subject to all requirements set forth in 18 USC § 926B.

## Firearms

---

### **312.11 DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE - 1033 SMALL ARMS**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office participates in a program known as the 1033 program with the United States Department of Defense. Through this program the Merced County Sheriff's Office may acquire certain small arms for the exclusive use in providing law enforcement services. The small arms that are acquired under the 1033 program are on loan and remain the property of the United States Government. The acquisition of Small Arms under this program is controlled and administered by the Law Enforcement Support Office (L.E.S.O.) and the California Governor's Office of Emergency Services (CalOES).

The types of firearms available for acquisition are as follows:

- a. M16A2 Rifle - 5.56 X 45MM (.223)
- b. M14 Rifle - 7.62 X 51MM (.308)
- c. M1911 Pistol -.45 CAL

#### **312.11.1 ISSUANCE OF ACQUIRED 1033 SMALL ARMS**

Small Arms that are issued to deputies must have a documented chain of custody at all times. The chain of custody must contain a signature of the receiving deputy indicating that he/she has received the appropriate small arm(s) with the correct serial number(s).

It shall be the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to issue acquired 1033 small arms to deputies for use in the performance of their official duties. Upon issuance of any 1033 Small arms obtained under this program deputies will complete an equipment custody receipt (ECR) provided to them by the Firearms Bureau Supervisor.

If the issued 1033 smalls arms equipment is returned by the receiving deputy a new Equipment Custody Receipt will be completed by the Firearms Bureau Supervisor indicating that the said equipment was returned and is now located in the armory. All 1033 Small Arms acquired by the Merced County Sheriff's Office not issued and in the armory inventory are under the direct control of the Firearms Bureau Supervisor. One Equipment Custody Card can be used for multiple small arms issued to the same deputy or stored in the same location.

#### **312.11.2 INVENTORY CONTROL OF ACQUIRED 1033 SMALL ARMS**

It shall be the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to document and control the inventory of acquired 1033 Program Small Arms in three separate data bases to insure checks and balances between each system.

a. Each 1033 Small Arms acquired by the Merced County Sheriff's Office will have an assigned inventory number within the agencies equipment inventory system. This unique number will be clearly written or inscribed on the equipment for quick identification. Within the Merced County Sheriff's Office equipment inventory system the item will be designated as a 1033 weapon. All 1033 Small Arms will be searchable under the designation of 1033 weapon.

b. A complete list of Inventory Worksheets, along with Equipment Custody Receipts for acquired 1033 Small Arms will be maintained by the Firearms Bureau Supervisor in the agencies Range

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Firearms*

---

network folder. The Firearms Bureau Supervisor will routinely compare (ECR CARDS) and Inventory worksheets to insure accuracy and chain of custody.

c. A separate master list of all 1033 Small Arms will be maintained in a spreadsheet for quick reference and research. The master list will be maintained by the Firearms Bureau Supervisor in the agencies Range network folder, protected by a password.

### 312.11.3 SECURITY AND STORAGE OF ACQUIRED 1033 SMALL ARMS

The security and storage of acquired 1033 Small Arms follows the same guidelines and procedures and outlined previously in this policy. Security and Storage of patrol rifles is also outlined in section 432 - Patrol Rifles,

## Vehicle Pursuits

### 314.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Vehicle pursuits expose innocent citizens, law enforcement officers and fleeing violators to the risk of serious injury or death. The primary purpose of this policy is to provide deputies with guidance in balancing the safety of the public and themselves against law enforcement's duty to apprehend violators of the law. Another purpose of this policy is to reduce the potential for pursuit-related collisions. Vehicular pursuits require deputies to exhibit a high degree of common sense and sound judgment. Deputies must not forget that the immediate apprehension of a suspect is generally not more important than the safety of the public and pursuing deputies.

Deciding whether to pursue a motor vehicle is a critical decision that must be made quickly and under difficult and unpredictable circumstances. In recognizing the potential risk to public safety created by vehicular pursuits, no deputy or supervisor shall be criticized or disciplined for deciding not to engage in a vehicular pursuit because of the risk involved. This includes circumstances where department policy would permit the initiation or continuation of the pursuit. It is recognized that vehicular pursuits are not always predictable and decisions made pursuant to this policy will be evaluated according to the totality of the circumstances reasonably available at the time of the pursuit.

Deputies must remember that the most important factors to the successful conclusion of a pursuit are proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment. Deputy's conduct during the course of a pursuit must be objectively reasonable; that is, what a reasonable deputy would do under the circumstances. An unreasonable individual's desire to apprehend a fleeing suspect at all costs has no place in professional law enforcement.

#### 314.1.1 VEHICLE PURSUIT DEFINED

A vehicle pursuit is an event involving one or more law enforcement officers attempting to apprehend a suspect, who is attempting to avoid arrest while operating a motor vehicle by using high-speed driving or other evasive tactics, such as driving off a highway, turning suddenly, or driving in a legal manner but willfully failing to yield to a deputy's signal to stop.

### 314.2 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

It shall be the policy of this department that a vehicle pursuit shall be conducted only with red light and siren as required by Vehicle Code § 21055 for exemption from compliance with the rules of the road. The following policy is established to provide deputies with guidelines for driving with due regard and caution for the safety of all persons using the highway as required by Vehicle Code § 21056.

#### 314.2.1 WHEN TO INITIATE A PURSUIT

Deputies are authorized to initiate a pursuit when it is reasonable to believe that a suspect is attempting to evade arrest or detention by fleeing in a vehicle.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

The following factors individually and collectively shall be considered in deciding whether to initiate a pursuit:

- (a) Seriousness of the known or reasonably suspected crime and its relationship to community safety.
- (b) The importance of protecting the public and balancing the known or reasonably suspected offense and the apparent need for immediate capture against the risks to deputies, innocent motorists and others.
- (c) Apparent nature of the fleeing suspects (e.g., whether the suspects represent a serious threat to public safety).
- (d) The identity of the suspects has been verified and there is comparatively minimal risk in allowing the suspects to be apprehended at a later time.
- (e) Safety of the public in the area of the pursuit, including the type of area, time of day, the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and the speed of the pursuit relative to these factors.
- (f) Pursuing deputies familiarity with the area of the pursuit, the quality of radio communications between the pursuing units and the dispatcher/supervisor and the driving capabilities of the pursuing deputies under the conditions of the pursuit.
- (g) Weather, traffic and road conditions that substantially increase the danger of the pursuit beyond the worth of apprehending the suspect.
- (h) Performance capabilities of the vehicles used in the pursuit in relation to the speeds and other conditions of the pursuit.
- (i) Vehicle speeds.
- (j) Other persons in or on the pursued vehicle (e.g., passengers, co-offenders and hostages).
- (k) Availability of other resources such as helicopter assistance.
- (l) The sheriff's unit is carrying passengers other than sheriff's deputies. Pursuits should not be undertaken with a prisoner in the police vehicle.

#### 314.2.2 WHEN TO TERMINATE A PURSUIT

Pursuits should be discontinued whenever the totality of objective circumstances known or which reasonably ought to be known to the deputy or supervisor during the pursuit indicates that the present risks of continuing the pursuit reasonably appear to outweigh the risks resulting from the suspect's escape.

The factors listed in When to Initiate a Pursuit of this policy are expressly included herein and will apply equally to the decision to discontinue as well as the decision to initiate a pursuit. Deputies and supervisors must objectively and continuously weigh the seriousness of the offense against the potential danger to innocent motorists and themselves when electing to continue a pursuit. In

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

the context of this policy, the term “terminate” shall be construed to mean discontinue or to stop chasing the fleeing vehicle.

In addition to the factors listed in When to Initiate a Pursuit of this policy, the following factors should also be considered in deciding whether to terminate a pursuit:

- (a) Distance between the pursuing deputies and the fleeing vehicle is so great that further pursuit would be futile or require the pursuit to continue for an unreasonable time and/or distance.
- (b) Pursued vehicle’s location is no longer definitely known.
- (c) Deputy’s pursuit vehicle sustains any type of damage that renders it unsafe to drive.
- (d) Extended pursuits of violators for misdemeanors not involving violence or risk of serious harm (independent of the pursuit) are discouraged.
- (e) There are hazards to uninvolved bystanders or motorists.
- (f) If the identity of the offender is known and it does not reasonably appear that the need for immediate capture outweighs the risks associated with continuing the pursuit, deputies should strongly consider discontinuing the pursuit and apprehending the offender at a later time.
- (g) Pursuit is terminated by a supervisor.

### **314.2.3 SPEED LIMITS**

The speed of a pursuit is a factor that should be evaluated on a continuing basis by the deputy and supervisor. Evaluation of vehicle speeds shall take into consideration public safety, officer safety and the safety of the occupants of the fleeing vehicle.

Should high vehicle speeds be reached during a pursuit, deputies and supervisors shall also consider these factors when determining the reasonableness of the speed of the pursuit:

- (a) Pursuit speeds have become unreasonably unsafe for the surrounding conditions.
- (b) Pursuit speeds have exceeded the driving ability of the deputy.
- (c) Pursuit speeds are beyond the capabilities of the pursuit vehicle thus making its operation unsafe.

### **314.3 PURSUIT UNITS**

Pursuit units should be limited to three vehicles (two units and a supervisor); however, the number of units involved will vary with the circumstances. A deputy or supervisor may request additional units to join a pursuit if, after assessing the factors outlined above, it appears that the number of deputies involved would be insufficient to safely arrest the suspects. All other deputies should stay out of the pursuit, but should remain alert to its progress and location. Any deputy who drops out of a pursuit may then, if necessary, proceed to the termination point at legal speeds, following the appropriate rules of the road.

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

### 314.3.1 MOTORCYCLE OFFICERS

A distinctively marked patrol vehicle equipped with emergency overhead lighting should replace a sheriff's motorcycle as primary and/or secondary pursuit unit as soon as practical.

### 314.3.2 VEHICLES WITHOUT EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT

Vehicles not equipped with red light and siren are generally prohibited from initiating or joining in any pursuit. Deputy(s) in such vehicles, however, may become involved in emergency activities involving serious crimes or life threatening situations. Those deputies should terminate their involvement in any pursuit immediately upon arrival of a sufficient number of emergency law enforcement vehicles or any law enforcement aircraft. The exemptions provided by Vehicle Code § 21055 do not apply to deputies using vehicles without emergency equipment.

### 314.3.3 PRIMARY UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

The initial pursuing unit will be designated as the primary pursuit unit and will be responsible for the conduct of the pursuit unless it is unable to remain reasonably close enough to the violator's vehicle. The primary responsibility of the deputy initiating the pursuit is the apprehension of the suspects without unreasonable danger to him/herself or other persons.

Notify Dispatch that a vehicle pursuit has been initiated and as soon as practicable provide information including, but not limited to:

- (a) Reason for the pursuit.
- (b) Location and direction of travel.
- (c) Speed of the fleeing vehicle.
- (d) Description of the fleeing vehicle and license number, if known.
- (e) Number of known occupants.
- (f) The identity or description of the known occupants.
- (g) Information concerning the use of firearms, threat of force, injuries, hostages or other unusual hazards.

Unless relieved by a supervisor or secondary unit, the deputy in the primary unit shall be responsible for the broadcasting of the progress of the pursuit. Unless practical circumstances indicate otherwise, and in order to concentrate on pursuit driving, the primary deputy should relinquish the responsibility of broadcasting the progress of the pursuit to a secondary unit or aircraft joining the pursuit.

### 314.3.4 SECONDARY UNITS RESPONSIBILITIES

The second deputy in the pursuit is responsible for the following:

- (a) The deputy in the secondary unit should immediately notify the dispatcher of entry into the pursuit.

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

- (b) Remain a safe distance behind the primary unit unless directed to assume the role of primary deputy, or if the primary unit is unable to continue the pursuit.
- (c) The secondary deputy should be responsible for broadcasting the progress of the pursuit unless the situation indicates otherwise.

### 314.3.5 PURSUIT DRIVING TACTICS

The decision to use specific driving tactics requires the same assessment of considerations outlined in the factors to be considered concerning pursuit initiation and termination. The following are tactics for units involved in the pursuit:

- (a) Deputies, considering their driving skills and vehicle performance capabilities, will space themselves from other involved vehicles such that they are able to see and avoid hazards or react safely to maneuvers by the fleeing vehicle.
- (b) Because intersections can present increased risks, the following tactics should be considered:
  - 1. Available units not directly involved in the pursuit may proceed safely to controlled intersections ahead of the pursuit in an effort to warn cross traffic.
  - 2. Pursuing units should exercise due caution when proceeding through controlled intersections.
- (c) As a general rule, deputies should not pursue a vehicle driving left of center (wrong way) on a freeway. In the event that the pursued vehicle does so, the following tactics should be considered:
  - 1. Requesting assistance from an air unit.
  - 2. Maintaining visual contact with the pursued vehicle by paralleling it on the correct side of the roadway.
  - 3. Requesting other units to observe exits available to the suspects.
- (d) Notifying the California Highway Patrol (CHP) and/or other jurisdictional agency if it appears that the pursuit may enter their jurisdiction.
- (e) Deputies involved in a pursuit should not attempt to pass other units unless the situation indicates otherwise or they are requested to do so by the primary unit.

### 314.3.6 TACTICS/PROCEDURES FOR UNITS NOT INVOLVED IN THE PURSUIT

There should be no paralleling of the pursuit route. Deputies are authorized to use emergency equipment at intersections along the pursuit path to clear intersections of vehicular and pedestrian traffic to protect the public. Deputies should remain in their assigned area and should not become involved with the pursuit unless directed otherwise by a supervisor.

Non-pursuing personnel needed at the termination of the pursuit should respond in a non-emergency manner, observing the rules of the road.

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

The primary and secondary units should be the only units operating under emergency conditions (red light and siren) unless other units are assigned to the pursuit.

### **314.3.7 PURSUIT TRAILING**

In the event the initiating unit from this agency either relinquishes control of the pursuit to another unit or jurisdiction, that initiating unit may, with permission of a supervisor, trail the pursuit to the termination point in order to provide necessary information and assistance for the arrest of the suspects.

The term trail means to follow the path of the pursuit at a safe speed while obeying all traffic laws and without activating emergency equipment. If the pursuit is at a slow rate of speed, the trailing unit will maintain sufficient distance from the pursuit units so as to clearly indicate an absence of participation in the pursuit.

### **314.3.8 AIRCRAFT ASSISTANCE**

When available, aircraft/helicopter assistance should be requested in accordance with Policy Manual § 438 (Obtaining Helicopter Support). Once the air unit has established visual contact with the pursued vehicle, it should assume control over the pursuit. The primary and secondary ground units should consider the participation of aircraft assistance when determining whether to continue the pursuit.

The air unit should coordinate the activities of resources on the ground, report progress of the pursuit and provide deputies and supervisors with details of upcoming traffic congestion, road hazards, or other pertinent information to evaluate whether or not to continue the pursuit. If ground units are not within visual contact and the air unit determines that it is unsafe to continue the pursuit, the air unit has the authority to terminate the pursuit.

### **314.3.9 CANINE UNIT ASSISTANCE**

A supervisor shall have the discretion to have the primary unit relinquish its position to a canine unit and assume the secondary unit responsibilities.

## **314.4 SUPERVISORY CONTROL AND RESPONSIBILITY**

It is the policy of this department that available supervisory and management control will be exercised over all vehicle pursuits involving deputies from this department.

The field supervisor of the deputy initiating the pursuit, or if unavailable, the nearest field supervisor will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Upon becoming aware of a pursuit, immediately ascertaining all reasonably available information to continuously assess the situation and risk factors associated with the pursuit in order to ensure that the pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.
- (b) Engaging in the pursuit, when appropriate, to provide on-scene supervision.
- (c) Exercising management and control of the pursuit even if not engaged in it.

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

- (d) Ensuring that no more than the number of required police units needed are involved in the pursuit under the guidelines set forth in this policy.
- (e) Directing that the pursuit be terminated if, in his/her judgment, it is unjustified to continue the pursuit under the guidelines of this policy.
- (f) Ensuring that aircraft are requested if available.
- (g) Ensuring that the proper radio channel is being used.
- (h) Ensuring the notification and/or coordination of outside agencies if the pursuit either leaves or is likely to leave the jurisdiction of this agency.
- (i) Controlling and managing MCSO units when a pursuit enters another jurisdiction.
- (j) Preparing post-pursuit critique and analysis of the pursuit for training purposes.

### **314.5 COMMUNICATIONS**

If the pursuit is confined within the County limits, radio communications will be conducted on the primary channel unless instructed otherwise by a supervisor or dispatcher. If the pursuit leaves the jurisdiction of this department or such is imminent, involved units should, whenever available, switch radio communications to an emergency channel most accessible by participating agencies and units.

When multiple agencies are involved in the pursuit, the "XMD Command East or West" radio channels may be utilized for inter-agency radio communications interoperability.

#### **314.5.1 COMMUNICATION CENTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon notification that a pursuit has been initiated, Dispatch will:

- (a) Coordinate pursuit communications of the involved units and personnel.
- (b) Notify and coordinate with other involved or affected agencies as practicable.
- (c) Ensure that a field supervisor is notified of the pursuit.
- (d) Assign an incident number and log all pursuit activities.
- (e) Broadcast pursuit updates as well as other pertinent information as necessary.
- (f) Notify the Patrol Lieutenant as soon as practicable.

#### **314.5.2 LOSS OF PURSUED VEHICLE**

When the pursued vehicle is lost, the primary unit should broadcast pertinent information to assist other units in locating suspects. The primary unit will be responsible for coordinating any further search for either the pursued vehicle or suspects fleeing on foot.

### **314.6 INTER-JURISDICTIONAL CONSIDERATIONS**

When a pursuit enters another agency's jurisdiction, the primary deputy or supervisor, taking into consideration distance traveled, unfamiliarity with the area and other pertinent facts, should

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

determine whether to request the other agency to assume the pursuit. Unless entry into another jurisdiction is expected to be brief, it is generally recommended that the primary deputy or supervisor ensure that notification is provided to each outside jurisdiction into which the pursuit is reasonably expected to enter, regardless of whether such jurisdiction is expected to assist.

#### 314.6.1 ASSUMPTION OF PURSUIT BY ANOTHER AGENCY

Units originally involved will discontinue the pursuit when advised that another agency has assumed the pursuit and assistance of the Merced County Sheriff's Office is no longer needed. Upon discontinuing the pursuit, the primary unit may proceed upon request, with or at the direction of a supervisor, to the termination point to assist in the investigation.

The role and responsibilities of deputies at the termination of a pursuit initiated by this department shall be coordinated with appropriate consideration of the units from the agency assuming the pursuit.

Notification of a pursuit in progress should not be construed as a request to join the pursuit. Requests to or from another agency to assume a pursuit should be specific. Because of communication limitations between local agencies and CHP units, a request for CHP assistance will mean that they will assume responsibilities for the pursuit. For the same reasons, when a pursuit leaves the freeway and a request for assistance is made to this department, the CHP should relinquish control.

#### 314.6.2 PURSUITS EXTENDING INTO THIS JURISDICTION

The agency that initiates a pursuit shall be responsible for conducting the pursuit. Units from this department should not join a pursuit unless specifically requested to do so by the agency whose officers are in pursuit. The exception to this is when a single unit from the initiating agency is in pursuit. Under this circumstance, a unit from this department may join the pursuit until sufficient units from the initiating agency join the pursuit.

When a request is made for this department to assist or take over a pursuit from another agency that has entered this jurisdiction, the supervisor should consider these additional following factors:

- (a) Ability to maintain the pursuit.
- (b) Circumstances serious enough to continue the pursuit.
- (c) Adequate staffing to continue the pursuit.
- (d) The public's safety within this jurisdiction.
- (e) Safety of the pursuing deputies.

As soon as practical, a supervisor should review a request for assistance from another agency. The supervisor, after consideration of the above factors, may decline to assist in, or assume the other agency's pursuit.

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

Assistance to a pursuing allied agency by deputies of this department will terminate at the County limits provided that the pursuing officers have sufficient assistance from other sources. Ongoing participation from this department may continue only until sufficient assistance is present.

In the event that a pursuit from another agency terminates within this jurisdiction, deputies shall provide appropriate assistance to officers from the allied agency including, but not limited to, scene control, coordination and completion of supplemental reports and any other assistance requested or needed.

### **314.7 PURSUIT INTERVENTION**

Pursuit intervention is an attempt to terminate the ability of a suspect to continue to flee in a motor vehicle through tactical application of technology, road spikes, blocking, boxing, PIT (Pursuit Intervention Technique), ramming or roadblock procedures. In this context, ramming shall be construed to mean maneuvering the sheriff's unit into contact with the pursued vehicle to mechanically disable or forcibly position it such that further flight is not possible or practicable.

#### **314.7.1 WHEN USE IS AUTHORIZED**

Use of pursuit intervention tactics should be employed only after approval of a supervisor. In deciding whether to use intervention tactics, deputies/supervisors should balance the risks of allowing the pursuit to continue with the potential hazards arising from the use of each tactic to the public, the deputies and persons in or on the pursued vehicle. With these risks in mind, the decision to use any intervention tactic should be reasonable in light of the circumstances confronting the deputy at the time of the decision.

It is imperative that deputies act within the bounds of legality, good judgment and accepted practices.

#### **314.7.2 DEFINITIONS**

**Blocking or vehicle intercept** - A slow-speed coordinated maneuver where two or more patrol vehicles simultaneously intercept and block the movement of a suspect vehicle, the driver of which may be unaware of the impending enforcement stop, with the goal of containment and preventing a pursuit. Blocking is not a moving or stationary road block.

**Boxing-in** - A tactic designed to stop a violator's vehicle by surrounding it with law enforcement vehicles and then slowing all vehicles to a stop.

**Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT)** - A low-speed maneuver designed to cause the suspect vehicle to spin out and terminate the pursuit.

**Ramming** - The deliberate act of impacting a violator's vehicle with another vehicle to functionally damage or otherwise force the violator's vehicle to stop.

**Roadblocks** - A tactic designed to stop a violator's vehicle by intentionally placing an emergency vehicle or other immovable object in the path of the violator's vehicle.

**Spikes or tack strips** - A device that extends across the roadway designed to puncture the tires of the pursued vehicle.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

#### 314.7.3 USE OF FIREARMS

The use of firearms to disable a pursued vehicle is not generally an effective tactic and involves all the dangers associated with discharging firearms. Deputies should not utilize firearms during an ongoing pursuit unless the conditions and circumstances dictate that such use reasonably appears necessary to protect life. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit any deputy from using a firearm to stop a suspect from using a vehicle as a deadly weapon.

#### 314.7.4 INTERVENTION STANDARDS

Any pursuit intervention tactic, depending upon the conditions and circumstances under which it is used, may present dangers to the deputies, the public or anyone in or on the vehicle being pursued. Certain applications of intervention tactics may be construed to be a use of deadly force and subject to the requirements for such use. Deputies shall consider these facts and requirements prior to deciding how, when, where and if an intervention tactic should be employed.

- (a) Blocking or vehicle intercept should only be considered in cases involving felony suspects or impaired drivers who pose a threat to public safety when deputies reasonably believe that attempting a conventional enforcement stop will likely result in the driver attempting to flee in the vehicle. Because of the potential risks involved, this technique should only be employed by deputies who have received training in such tactics after giving consideration to the following:
  - 1. The need to immediately stop the suspect vehicle or prevent it from leaving substantially outweighs the risks of injury or death to occupants of the suspect vehicle, deputies, or other members of the public.
  - 2. All other reasonable intervention techniques have failed or reasonably appear ineffective.
  - 3. Employing the blocking maneuver does not unreasonably increase the risk to officer safety.
  - 4. The target vehicle is stopped or traveling at a low speed.
  - 5. At no time should civilian vehicles be used to deploy this technique.
- (b) Only those deputies trained in the use of the Pursuit Intervention Technique (PIT) will be authorized to use this procedure and only then with approval of a supervisor upon consideration of the circumstances and conditions presented at the time, including the potential for risk of injury to deputies, the public and occupants of the pursued vehicle.
- (c) Ramming a fleeing vehicle should be done only after other reasonable tactical means at the deputy's disposal have been exhausted. This tactic should be reserved for situations where there does not appear to be another reasonable alternative method. This policy is an administrative guide to direct deputies in their decision-making process before ramming another vehicle. When ramming is used as a means to stop a fleeing vehicle, one or more of the following factors should be present:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

1. The suspect is an actual or suspected felon who reasonably appears to represent a serious threat to the public if not apprehended.
  2. The suspect is driving with willful or wanton disregard for the safety of other persons or is driving in a reckless and life-endangering manner.
  3. If there does not reasonably appear to be a present or immediately foreseeable serious threat to the public, the use of ramming is not authorized.
- (d) As with all intervention techniques, pursuing deputies should obtain supervisor approval before attempting to box a suspect vehicle during a pursuit. The use of such a technique must be carefully coordinated with all involved units, taking into consideration the circumstances and conditions presented at the time as well as the potential risk of injury to deputies, the public and occupants of the pursued vehicle.
- (e) The use of spike strips should be approved in advance by a supervisor and deployed only when it is reasonably certain that only the pursued vehicle will be affected by their use. Deputies should carefully consider the limitations of such devices as well as the potential risks to deputies, the public and occupants of the pursued vehicle. If the pursued vehicle is a motorcycle, a vehicle transporting hazardous materials, or a school bus transporting children, deputies and supervisors should weigh the potential consequences against the need to immediately stop the vehicle.
- (f) Because roadblocks involve a potential for serious injury or death to occupants of the pursued vehicle if the suspect does not stop, the intentional placement of roadblocks in the direct path of a pursued vehicle is generally discouraged and should not be deployed without prior approval of a supervisor and only then under extraordinary conditions when all other reasonable intervention techniques have failed or reasonably appear ineffective and the need to immediately stop the pursued vehicle substantially outweighs the risks of injury or death to occupants of the pursued vehicle, deputies or other members of the public.

#### **314.7.5 CAPTURE OF SUSPECTS**

Proper self-discipline and sound professional judgment are the keys to a successful conclusion of a pursuit and apprehension of evading suspects. Deputies shall use only that amount of force, which reasonably appears necessary under the circumstances, to properly perform their lawful duties.

Unless relieved by a supervisor the primary deputy should coordinate efforts to apprehend the suspect(s) following the pursuit. Deputies should consider safety of the public and the involved deputies when formulating plans to contain and capture the suspect.

#### **314.8 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The following reports should be completed upon conclusion of all pursuits:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

- (a) The primary deputy should complete appropriate crime/arrest reports.
- (b) The appropriate supervisor shall ensure that an Allied Agency Vehicle Pursuit Report (form CHP 187A) is filed with the CHP not later than 30 days following the pursuit (Vehicle Code § 14602.1). The primary deputy should complete as much of the required information on the form as is known and forward the report to the appropriate supervisor for review and distribution.
- (c) After first obtaining the available information, a field supervisor shall promptly complete an administrative notification, briefly summarizing the pursuit. The administrative notification should minimally contain the following information:
  - 1. Date and time of pursuit
  - 2. Length of pursuit
  - 3. Involved units and deputies
  - 4. Initial reason for pursuit
  - 5. Starting and termination points
  - 6. Disposition (arrest, citation), including arrestee information if applicable
  - 7. Injuries and/or property damage
  - 8. Medical treatment
  - 9. Name of supervisor at scene
  - 10. A preliminary determination whether the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy and whether additional review or follow-up is warranted

#### **314.8.1 REGULAR AND PERIODIC PURSUIT TRAINING**

In addition to initial and supplementary Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) training on pursuits required by Penal Code § 13519.8, all sworn members of this department will participate no less than annually in regular and periodic department training addressing this policy and the importance of vehicle safety and protecting the public at all times, including a recognition of the need to balance the known offense and the need for immediate capture against the risks to deputies and others (Vehicle Code § 17004.7(d)).

#### **314.8.2 POLICY REVIEW**

Each sworn member of this department shall certify in writing that they have received, read and understand this policy initially and upon any amendments. The POST attestation form, or an equivalent form, may be used to document the compliance and should be retained in the member's training file.

#### **314.9 APPLICATION OF VEHICLE PURSUIT POLICY**

This policy is expressly written and adopted pursuant to the provisions of Vehicle Code § 17004.7, with additional input from the POST Vehicle Pursuit Guidelines.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Vehicle Pursuits*

---

## Deputy Response to Calls

### 316.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the safe and appropriate response to emergency and non-emergency situations whether dispatched or self-initiated.

### 316.2 RESPONSE TO CALLS

Deputies dispatched "Code-3" shall consider the call an emergency response and proceed immediately. Deputies responding Code-3 shall continuously operate emergency lighting equipment, including at minimum a steady forward facing red light, and shall sound the siren as reasonably necessary pursuant to Vehicle Code § 21055.

Responding with emergency light(s) and siren does not relieve the deputy of the duty to continue to drive with due regard for the safety of all persons. The use of any other warning equipment without a red light and siren does not provide any exemption from the Vehicle Code.

Deputies should only respond Code-3 when so dispatched or when circumstances reasonably indicate an emergency response is required. Deputies not authorized to respond Code-3 shall observe all traffic laws and proceed without the use of emergency lights and siren.

Animal Control Officers are not permitted to respond code-3 or have any other colored lights as expressly limited by California Vehicle Code section 25271.5 in their assigned Animal Control Services Vehicles.

### 316.3 REQUESTING EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE

Requests for emergency assistance should be limited to those situations where the involved personnel reasonably believe that there is an immediate threat to the safety of deputies, or assistance is needed to prevent imminent serious harm to a citizen. In any event, where a situation has stabilized and emergency response is not required, the requesting deputy shall immediately notify Dispatch.

If circumstances permit, the requesting deputy should give the following information:

- The unit number
- The location
- The reason for the request and type of emergency
- The number of units required

#### 316.3.1 NUMBER OF UNITS ASSIGNED

Normally, only one unit should respond to an emergency call Code-3 unless a field supervisor authorizes an additional unit(s).

## *Deputy Response to Calls*

---

### **316.4 INITIATING CODE 3 RESPONSE**

If a deputy believes a Code-3 response to any call is appropriate, the deputy shall immediately notify Dispatch. Generally, only one unit should respond Code-3 to any situation. Should another deputy believe a Code-3 response is appropriate, Dispatch shall be notified and a field supervisor will make a determination as to whether one or more deputies driving Code-3 is appropriate.

In the event of a "CODE 33" emergency channel designation on channel one, deputies who are responding Code-3 will advise dispatch on channel two that they are responding Code-3 to the event. Dispatch may or may not be able to acknowledge the channel two traffic due to the emergency on channel one. However, since channel two is recorded and other units and supervisors who are not involved in the "CODE 33" detail are on channel two, they will be aware of units that are responding Code-3.

### **316.5 RESPONSIBILITIES OF RESPONDING DEPUTIES**

Deputies shall exercise sound judgment and care with due regard for life and property when responding to an emergency call. Deputies shall reduce speed at all street intersections to such a degree that they shall have complete control of the vehicle.

The decision to continue a Code-3 response is at the discretion of the deputy. If, in the deputy's judgment, the roadway conditions or traffic congestion does not permit such a response without unreasonable risk, the deputy may elect to respond to the call without the use of red lights and siren at the legal speed limit. In such an event, the deputy should immediately notify Dispatch. A deputy shall also discontinue the Code-3 response when directed by a supervisor.

Upon receiving authorization or determining a Code-3 response is appropriate, a deputy shall immediately give the location from which he/she is responding.

### **316.6 COMMUNICATIONS RESPONSIBILITIES**

A dispatcher shall assign a Code-3 response when a deputy requests emergency assistance or available information reasonably indicates that the public is threatened with serious injury or death and immediate response is needed. In all other circumstances, the dispatcher shall obtain authorization from a field supervisor prior to assigning units Code-3. The dispatcher shall:

- (a) Attempt to assign the closest available unit to the location requiring assistance
- (b) Immediately notify a field supervisor
- (c) Confirm the location from which the unit is responding
- (d) Notify and coordinate allied emergency services (e.g., fire and ambulance)
- (e) Continue to obtain and broadcast information as necessary concerning the response and monitor the situation until it is stabilized or terminated
- (f) Control all radio communications during the emergency and coordinate assistance under the direction of a field supervisor

## *Deputy Response to Calls*

---

### **316.7 SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon being notified that a Code-3 response has been initiated, a field supervisor shall verify the following:

- (a) The proper response has been initiated
- (b) No more than those units reasonably necessary under the circumstances are involved in the response
- (c) Affected outside jurisdictions are being notified as practical

The field supervisor shall monitor the response until it has been stabilized or terminated and assert control by directing units into or out of the response if necessary. If, in the supervisor's judgment, the circumstances require additional units to be assigned a Code-3 response, the supervisor may do so.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to terminate a Code-3 response that, in his/her judgment is inappropriate due to the circumstances.

When making the decision to authorize a Code-3 response, the field supervisor should consider the following:

- The type of call
- The necessity of a timely response
- Traffic and roadway conditions
- The location of the responding units

### **316.8 FAILURE OF EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT**

If the emergency equipment on the vehicle should fail to operate, the deputy must terminate the Code-3 response and respond accordingly. In all cases, the deputy shall notify a field supervisor or Dispatch of the equipment failure so that another unit may be assigned to the emergency response.

# Strip Search Policy

## 317.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

### A) STRIP SEARCH

"Strip Search" means a search which requires a person to remove or arrange some or all of his or her clothing so as to permit a visual inspection of the underclothing, breasts, buttocks, or genitalia of such person.

The following are examples of a legal strip search if conducted 1) with the prior written authorization of the supervisor on duty and 2) you have reasonable suspicion, based on specific and articulable facts, to believe the person is concealing a weapon or contraband:

- pulling a person's underpants away from the waist to inspect the buttocks or genitalia.
- pulling a detainee's pants away from his waist to look between the outerpants and his underpants.

The following is an example of an illegal strip search since it does not involve weapons or contraband:

- ordering a male to lift up his t-shirt to inspect the tattoos on his chest to identify him as a subject of a warrant.

### B) VISUAL BODY CAVITY SEARCH:

"Visual Body Cavity Search" means visual inspection of a body cavity of a person.

The following are examples of a legal visual body cavity search if conducted 1) with the prior written authorization of the supervisor on duty and 2) you have reasonable suspicion, based on specific and articulable facts, to believe the person is concealing a weapon or contraband:

- visually inspecting the rectal cavity of a person.
- visually inspecting the vagina of a female.

Requirements for Conducting a Strip Search or Visual Body Cavity Search:

The following requirements, applying to both juvenile and adult searches, must be met prior to conducting a strip search or visual body cavity search:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Strip Search Policy*

---

- 1) The deputy or corrections officer must receive written authorization to conduct the search from a peace officer supervisor on duty. A corrections supervisor is not designated per the statute to authorize a strip search or a visual body cavity search. A "Strip Search/Visual Cavity Search Authorization" form must be completed and approved prior to the search. Telephonic authorization from the supervisor is permissible so long as the pre-written reasonable suspicion statement is reviewed and approved by the supervisor. Personnel are reminded that a supervisor's personal contact with the detainee often results in non-coerced consent to search.
- 2) With the exceptions of physicians or licensed medical personnel, persons conducting or present during the search must be of the same gender as the subject searched;
- 3) The search must be conducted in an area of privacy to ensure the search is not observed by anyone not participating in the search;
- 4) The person(s) conducting the strip search or visual body cavity search shall not touch the breasts, buttocks, or genitalia of the subject; and,
- 5) The completed authorization form must be submitted with all arrest reports and placed in the agency's records. It must be made available, upon request, to the person searched or their authorized representative. Computerized entries are not a substitute for the written and signed authorization form.
- 6) The authorizing supervisor shall obtain a case number for each search that is authorized per Card Closure code "SC201S".

NOTE: Consent to conduct a strip search or a visual body cavity search relieves the deputy and corrections officer from complying with these requirements.

#### **C) PHYSICAL BODY CAVITY SEARCH:**

"Physical Body Cavity Search" means a physical (actual physical contact) intrusion into a body cavity for the purpose of discovering any object concealed in the body cavity.

#### **Requirements for Conducting a Physical Body Cavity Search:**

The following requirements, applying to both juvenile and adult searches, must be met prior to conducting a physical body cavity search:

- 1) Obtain a search warrant (consent to search by the arrested person will not justify or authorize a physical body cavity search); and,
- 2) With the exceptions of physicians or licensed medical personnel, persons conducting or present during the search must be of the same gender as the subject searched;
- 3) The search must be conducted in an area of privacy to ensure the search is not observed by anyone not participating in the search;
- 4) Have the search conducted under sanitary conditions and then only by a physician, registered nurse, nurse practitioner, licensed vocational nurse, or level II emergency medical technician.

## *Strip Search Policy*

---

NOTE: Consent to conduct a physical body cavity search does not authorize the searcher to conduct such a search.

### **EXIGENT CIRCUMSTANCES: WEAPONS**

An exception to the strip search rules would arise in the case of exigent circumstances; such as when the deputy, pursuant to a lawful pat down search for weapons, has felt what he or she believes to be a weapon. A person hiding a weapon in his or her undergarments would constitute an exigent circumstance, justifying a strip search for the weapon. Any deviance from the strip search rules will require documented justification.

### **PERSONAL LIABILITY FOR VIOLATIONS:**

Both federal and state courts view strip searches, particularly body cavity searches, as invasive and offensive. Per Penal Code § 4030:

- A person who knowingly and willfully authorizes or conducts a strip, visual or physical body cavity search in violation of this section is guilty of a misdemeanor.
- Nothing in this section shall be construed as limiting any common law or statutory rights of any person regarding any action for damages or injunctive relief, or as precluding the prosecution under another provision of law of any peace officer or other person who has violated this section.
- Any person who suffers damage or harm as a result of a violation of this section may bring a civil action to recover actual damages, or one thousand dollars (\$1,000), whichever is greater. In addition, the court may, in its discretion, award punitive damages, equitable relief as it deems necessary and proper, and costs, including reasonable attorney's fees.

## Canines

### 318.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of canines to augment police services to the community including, but not limited to locating individuals and contraband and apprehending criminal offenders.

### 318.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that teams of handlers and canines meet and maintain the appropriate proficiency to effectively and reasonably carry out legitimate law enforcement objectives.

#### 318.2.1 PREPARATION FOR UTILIZING A CANINE

Prior to the use of a canine to search for or apprehend any individual, the canine handler and/or the supervisor on scene shall carefully consider all pertinent information that is reasonably available at the time. The information should include, but is not limited to the following:

- (a) The individual's age or estimate thereof.
- (b) The nature of the suspected offense.
- (c) Any potential danger to the public and/or other deputies at the scene if the canine is released.
- (d) The degree of resistance or threatened resistance, if any, the subject has shown.
- (e) The potential for escape or flight if the dog is not utilized.
- (f) The potential for injury to deputies or the public caused by the suspect if the canine is not utilized.

As circumstances permit, the canine handler should make every reasonable effort to communicate and coordinate with other involved personnel to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

A canine handler shall have the ultimate authority not to deploy the dog. The handler will evaluate each situation and determine if the use of a canine is technically feasible. Generally, the decision whether to deploy the dog shall remain with the handler. However, a supervisor sufficiently apprised of the situation may decide not to deploy the dog.

#### 318.2.2 WARNINGS GIVEN TO ANNOUNCE THE USE OF A CANINE

Unless it would otherwise increase the risk of injury or escape, a clearly audible warning to announce that a canine will be released if the person does not come forth, shall be made prior to releasing a canine. The canine handler, when practical, shall first advise the supervisor of his/her decision if a verbal warning is not given prior to releasing the canine. In the event of an apprehension, the handler shall document in any related report whether or not a verbal warning was given and, if none was given, the reasons why.

## *Canines*

---

### 318.2.3 USE OF NARCOTIC-DETECTION CANINES

A narcotic-detection-trained canine may be used in accordance with current law under the following circumstances:

- (a) To assist in the search for narcotics during a search warrant service.
- (b) To obtain a search warrant by using the detection canine in support of probable cause.
- (c) To search vehicles, buildings, bags and any other articles deemed necessary.

A narcotic-detection canine will not be used to search a person for narcotics.

### 318.2.4 GUIDELINES FOR NON-APPREHENSION USE

Because canines have senses far superior to those of humans, they may often be effectively utilized to track or search for non-criminals (e.g. lost children, individuals who may be disoriented or in need of medical attention) or even suspects wanted for minor criminal offenses. In such circumstances, it will be necessary for the handler to evaluate the conditions and ability of the canine to determine the feasibility of such an application.

- (a) Absent a change in circumstances that present an imminent threat to deputies, the canine or the public, such applications should be conducted on leash or under such conditions that will minimize the likelihood that the canine will bite or otherwise injure the individual.
- (b) Throughout the deployment of the canine in such circumstances, the handler should consider issuing periodic verbal assurances that the canine will not bite or hurt the person.
- (c) Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor, assisting personnel should take direction from the handler in order to minimize interference with the canine.
- (d) Once the individual has been located, the canine should be placed in a down stay or otherwise secured as soon as it becomes reasonably practicable.
- (e) Whenever the use of the canine results in a bite or any injury to any human or animal, the responsible canine handler shall immediately notify the canine coordinator.

### 318.2.5 REPORTING CANINE USE, BITES AND INJURIES

Whenever the service dog is deployed, regardless of any physical contact (i.e. bite) with a subject, a Canine Use Report shall be completed by the respective handler and turned in to the Unit Coordinator before going off-duty.

Whenever the use of the canine results in a bite or any injury to any human or animal, the responsible canine handler shall immediately notify the canine coordinator.

Whenever a canine becomes ill, the responsible canine handler shall immediately notify the canine coordinator.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Canines*

---

Whenever the use of the canine results in a bite or any injury a Canine Use Report Form shall be completed and included with any related incident report.

The injured party should be examined by qualified medical personnel (i.e., paramedics) or transported to an appropriate medical facility if the injury requires medical attention beyond first aid. If the injured party is in custody, a deputy should remain with the suspect until treatment has been rendered.

Photographs shall be taken of the bite or injury as soon as practicable after tending to the immediate needs of the injured party. Photographs shall be retained as evidence in accordance with current department evidence procedures. It shall be the responsibility of the Unit Coordinator to ensure that such photographs are retained until the potential need for use in any related civil proceeding has expired.

If a subject alleges an injury that is not visible, a supervisor shall be notified and the location of the alleged injury should be photographed as described above.

The Unit Coordinator will maintain liaison with the Animal Control Department to ensure that information regarding canine bites is not retained by its office. Canines used by law enforcement agencies are exempt from impoundment and reporting requirements to the Animal Control Department (Food and Agriculture Code § 31609(b)).

#### **318.2.6 REPORTING CANINE INJURIES**

In the event that a canine is injured, the injury will be immediately reported to the Unit Coordinator.

Medical care for any injured canine shall follow the protocol established in § 318.6 et seq.

The injury will be documented on a Canine Use Report Form.

#### **318.2.7 ASSIGNMENT OF CANINES**

Operations Division canine units are designed to supplement and assist the patrol units. When patrol staffing permits and there are sufficient apprehension canines available, an apprehension canine may be assigned to one of the Sheriff's Office specialty enforcement teams.

Canine teams should not be assigned to handle matters that will take them out of service for extended periods of time unless absolutely necessary and only with the approval of a supervisor.

Canine units that are assigned to the Corrections Division shall fall under this policy and the supervision of the assigned canine unit coordinator.

### **318.3 ASSIGNMENT**

Canine teams should be assigned to assist and supplement the Uniform Patrol Division to function primarily in assist or cover assignments. However, they may be assigned by the shift supervisor to other functions, such as routine calls for service, based on the current operational needs.

#### **318.3.1 REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM OTHER AGENCIES**

The appropriate Operations Captain or the Unit Coordinator must approve all requests for canine assistance from outside agencies, subject to the following provisions:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Canines*

---

- (a) Canine teams shall not be used for any assignment that is not consistent with this policy.
- (b) The handler has the ultimate authority to decide whether the canine should be used for any specific function or assignment.
- (c) Canine teams shall not be called out while off-duty or used outside the boundaries of the County of Merced unless authorized by the Operations Captain or the Unit Coordinator.
- (d) It shall be the responsibility of the canine handler to coordinate with outside agency personnel in order to minimize the risk of unintended injury.

#### **318.3.2 REQUEST FOR PUBLIC DEMONSTRATIONS**

All public requests for a canine team shall be approved by the Unit Coordinator prior to making any commitment.

Handlers shall not demonstrate any apprehension work to the public unless authorized to do so by the Unit Coordinator and the Operations Captain.

#### **318.4 SELECTION OF CANINE HANDLERS**

The following are the minimum qualifications for the assignment of canine handler:

- (a) Merced County Sheriff's Office deputy currently off probation
- (b) Reside in an adequately fenced, single-family, residence (minimum five-foot high fence with locking gates)
- (c) Have a garage which can be secured and accommodate a canine unit
- (d) Live within 30 minutes travel time from the Merced County Sheriff's Department County limits
- (e) Agree to be assigned to the position for a minimum of three years

#### **318.5 CANINE HANDLER RESPONSIBILITIES**

##### **318.5.1 AVAILABILITY**

- (a) The position of a full-time deputy canine handler is classified as a special assignment position.
- (b) Canine deputies who are assigned Apprehension Canines are assigned to varying shift schedules at the discretion of the Department.
- (c) In order to meet the priorities of patrol deputies, this policy requires that an Apprehension Canine deputy be assigned to each shift to the extent possible.
- (d) Shift preference for Apprehension Canine deputies will be based on seniority. However, Apprehension Canine deputies may adjust any given shift schedule subject

## Canines

---

to mutual agreement between the respective deputies and the approval of the Canine Unit supervisor.

- (e) Narcotics canine deputies who do not have concurrent responsibility as an Apprehension Canine deputy are not subject to this policy.
- (f) Any canine deputy, both Apprehension and Narcotics, shall be available for call-out under conditions specified by the Unit Supervisor.

### 318.5.2 CARE FOR THE CANINE AND EQUIPMENT

The handler shall ultimately be responsible for the health and welfare of the canine and shall ensure that the canine receives proper nutrition, grooming, training, medical care, affection, and living conditions. The handler will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Unless required by a particular application, the handler shall not expose the canine to any foreseeable and unreasonable risk of harm.
- (b) The handler shall maintain all department equipment under his/her control in a clean and serviceable condition and when not on duty shall maintain the canine unit in a garage, secured from public view.
- (c) When a handler takes a vacation or extended number of days off, the assigned canine vehicle shall be maintained at the Sheriff's Department facility.
- (d) Handlers shall permit the Unit Coordinator to conduct spontaneous on-site inspections of affected areas of their residence as well as the canine unit, to verify that conditions and equipment conform to this policy.
- (e) Any changes in the living status of the handler which may affect the lodging or environment of the canine shall be reported to the Unit Coordinator as soon as possible.
- (f) When off-duty, canines shall be maintained in kennels, provided by the County, at the homes of their handlers. When a canine is kenneled at the handler's home, the gate shall be secured.
- (g) The canine should be permitted to socialize in the home with the handler's family for short periods of time and under the direct supervision of the handler.
- (h) Under no circumstances will the canine be lodged at another location unless approved by the Unit Coordinator.
- (i) When off-duty, handlers shall not involve their canines in any activity or conduct unless approved in advance by the Unit Coordinator.
- (j) Whenever a canine handler anticipates taking a vacation or an extended number of days off, it may be necessary to temporarily relocate the canine. In those situations, the handler shall give reasonable notice to the Unit Coordinator so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

## *Canines*

---

### **318.5.3 CANINE IN PUBLIC AREAS**

All canines shall be kept on a leash when in areas that allow access to the public. Exceptions would include specific operations for which the canines are trained.

- (a) Canines shall not be left unattended in any area to which the public may have access.
- (b) When the canine unit is left unattended all windows and doors shall be secured in such a manner as to prevent unauthorized access to the dog. The handler shall also insure that the unattended unit remains inhabitable for the canine.

### **318.5.4 HANDLER COMPENSATION**

The canine handler shall be compensated for time spent in the care, feeding, grooming and other needs of the canine in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), and according to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement (29 USC § 207).

### **318.6 MEDICAL CARE OF THE CANINE**

All medical attention shall be rendered by the designated canine veterinarian, except during an emergency as provided in Policy Manual § 318.6.2.

#### **318.6.1 NON-EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

Non-emergency medical care will be coordinated through the Unit Coordinator.

Any indication that a canine is not in good physical condition shall be reported to the Unit Coordinator as soon as practical.

All records of medical treatment shall be maintained by the designated veterinarian.

#### **318.6.2 EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE**

The handler shall notify the Unit Coordinator as soon as practicable when emergency medical care for the canine is required.

Depending on the severity of the injury or illness, the canine shall either be treated by the designated veterinarian or transported to a designated emergency medical facility for treatment. If the handler and dog are out of the area, the handler may use the nearest available veterinarian.

#### **318.6.3 REPORTING DEPLOYMENTS, BITES AND INJURIES**

Whenever a canine deployment results in a bite or causes injury to an intended suspect, in addition to the on-duty supervisor being notified, the canine unit coordinator should be promptly notified. The injuries shall be documented in a canine use report. The injured person shall be promptly treated by emergency medical services personnel and, if appropriate, transported to an appropriate medical facility for further treatment. The deployment and injuries should also be included in any related incident or arrest report.

Single purpose canine handlers (narcotics, nitrate, etc) shall report any deployment for a narcotic search/find to the canine unit coordinator promptly.

## *Canines*

---

Any unintended bite or injury caused by a canine, whether on- or off-duty, shall be promptly reported to the canine coordinator. Unintended bites or injuries caused by a canine should be documented in an administrative report, not in a canine use report.

If an individual alleges an injury, either visible or not visible, a supervisor shall be notified and both the individual's injured and uninjured areas shall be photographed as soon as practicable after first tending to the immediate needs of the injured party. Photographs shall be retained as evidence in accordance with current department evidence procedures. The photographs shall be retained until the criminal proceeding is completed and the time for any related civil proceeding has expired.

Canines used by law enforcement agencies are generally exempt from impoundment and reporting requirements. However, the canine shall be made available for examination at any reasonable time if requested by the local health department. The canine handler shall also notify the local health department if the canine exhibits any abnormal behavior after a bite (Health and Safety Code § 121685).

### **318.7 TRAINING**

Before assignment in the field, each canine team shall be trained and certified to meet current POST (California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training) standards. Cross trained dog teams or those dog teams trained exclusively for the detection of narcotics and/or explosives shall be trained and certified to meet the standards established for such detection dogs by the California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training or the California Narcotic Canine Association or other recognized and approved certification standards.

The Unit Coordinator shall be responsible for scheduling periodic training for all department personnel in order to familiarize them with how to conduct themselves in the presence of department canines.

#### **318.7.1 CONTINUED TRAINING**

Each canine team shall thereafter be recertified to current POST standards and/or the California Narcotic Canine Association or other recognized and approved certification standards on an annual basis. Additional training considerations are as follows:

- (a) Canine teams shall receive training as determined by the Unit Coordinator.
- (b) Canine handlers are encouraged to engage in additional training with approval of the Unit Coordinator.
- (c) In order to ensure that all training is consistent, no handler, trainer, or outside vendor is authorized to train to a standard that is contrary to the policies of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.
- (d) All canine training shall be conducted while on-duty unless otherwise approved by the Unit Coordinator.

## *Canines*

---

### **318.7.2 FAILURE TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE POST TRAINING**

Any dog team failing POST canine certification and, if cross-trained, the California Narcotic Canine Association or other recognized and approved certification standards shall not be deployed in the field until certification is achieved. When practical, pending successful certification, the canine handler shall be temporarily reassigned to regular patrol duties.

### **318.7.3 TRAINING RECORDS**

All canine training records shall be maintained by the respective canine handler. Training outlines will be maintained on the department canine drive.

### **318.8 CANINE UNIT COORDINATOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Unit Coordinator shall be appointed by staff and shall supervise the Canine Program. The Unit Coordinator is directly responsible to the Operations Captain. The Unit Coordinator shall be responsible for, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Review all Canine Use Reports to insure compliance with policy and to identify training issues and other needs of the program.
- (b) Maintain liaison with the vendor kennel.
- (c) Maintain liaison with administrative staff and functional supervisors.
- (d) Maintain liaison with other agency canine coordinators.
- (e) Maintain accurate records to document canine activities.
- (f) Recommend and oversee the procurement of needed equipment and services for the unit.
- (g) Be responsible for scheduling all canine related activities.
- (h) Ensure the canine teams are scheduled for continuous training to maximize the capabilities of the teams.

### **318.9 CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE TRAINING AIDS**

Controlled substance training aids are required to effectively train and maintain drug detecting dogs. Further, controlled substances can also be an effective training aid during training sessions for law enforcement personnel and the public.

Health & Safety Code § 11367.5 provides that any Sheriff, Chief Of Police, the Chief of the Bureau of Controlled Substance Enforcement, or the Commissioner of the California Highway Patrol, or a designee thereof may, in his or her discretion, provide controlled substances in his or her possession for training purposes:

- (a) To any duly authorized peace officer or civilian drug detection canine trainer working under the direction of a law enforcement agency
- (b) Provided the controlled substances are no longer needed as criminal evidence

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Canines

---

- (c) Provided the person receiving the controlled substances, if required by the Drug Enforcement Administration, possesses a current and valid Drug Enforcement Administration registration that specifically authorizes the recipient to possess controlled substances while providing substance abuse training to law enforcement or the community or while providing canine drug detection training

#### 318.9.1 PROCEDURES

Due to the responsibilities and liabilities involved with possessing readily usable amounts of controlled substances and the ever-present danger of accidental ingestion of these controlled substances by the canine, the following procedure shall be strictly followed:

- (a) All necessary controlled substance training samples shall be acquired from the Merced County Sheriff's Office's evidence personnel or from allied agencies authorized by Health & Safety Code § 11367.5 to provide controlled substance training samples. All controlled substance training samples shall be weighed and tested prior to dispensing to the individual canine handler
- (b) The weight and test results shall be recorded and maintained by this department;
- (c) Any person receiving controlled substance training samples pursuant to Health & Safety Code § 11367.5 shall maintain custody and control of the controlled substances and shall keep records regarding any loss of, or damage to, those controlled substances
- (d) All controlled substance training samples will be inspected, weighed, and tested quarterly. The results of the quarterly testing shall be recorded and maintained by the canine coordinator with a copy forwarded to the dispensing agency
- (e) All controlled substance training samples will be stored in locked boxes at all times, except during training. The locked boxes shall be secured in the trunk of the canine handler's assigned patrol unit, or stored in a locked evidence locker. There are no exceptions to this procedure
- (f) The Canine Unit Coordinator shall periodically inspect every controlled substance training sample for damage or tampering and take any appropriate action;
- (g) Any unusable controlled substance training samples shall be returned to the Evidence Room or to the dispensing agency
- (h) All controlled substance training samples shall be returned to the dispensing agency upon the conclusion of the training or upon demand by the dispensing agency

#### 318.9.2 IMMUNITY

All duly authorized peace officers acting in the performance of their official duties and any person working under their immediate direction, supervision or instruction are immune from prosecution under the Uniform Controlled Substance Act while providing substance abuse training or canine drug detection training (Health & Safety Code § 11367.5(b)).

## *Canines*

---

### **318.10 EXPLOSIVE TRAINING AIDS**

Explosive training aids are required to effectively train and maintain the skills of explosives detection dogs and can also provide effective training for law enforcement personnel and the public. Peace officers are permitted by law to possess, transport, store or use explosives or destructive devices while acting within the scope and course of employment (Penal Code § 18800). Explosive training aids designed specifically for K-9 teams should be used whenever feasible. Due to the safety concerns in the handling and transportation of explosives, inert or non-hazardous training aids should be employed whenever feasible. The use of explosives or destructive devices for training aids is subject to the following requirements:

- (a) All explosive training aids, when not in use, shall be properly stored in a secure facility appropriate for the type of materials they contain.
- (b) An inventory ledger shall be maintained to document the type and quantity of explosives training aids held by the Canine Unit.
- (c) The Canine Coordinator shall be responsible to verify the explosives training aids on hand against the inventory ledger once each quarter.
- (d) Only members of the Canine Unit shall have access to the explosives training aid storage facility.
- (e) A primary and secondary custodian will be designated to minimize the possibility of loss of explosive training aids during and after the training. Generally, the handler will be designated as the primary custodian while the trainer or second person on scene will be designated as the secondary custodian.
- (f) Any lost or damaged explosives training aid shall be promptly reported to the Unit Coordinator in writing who will determine if any further action will be necessary. Any loss of explosives will be reported to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

# Domestic Violence

## 320.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidelines necessary to deter, prevent and reduce domestic violence through vigorous enforcement and to address domestic violence as a serious crime against society. The policy specifically addresses the commitment of this department to take enforcement action when appropriate, to provide assistance to victims and to guide deputies in the investigation of domestic violence.

### 320.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Court order** - All forms of orders related to domestic violence, that have been issued by a court of this state or another, whether civil or criminal, regardless of whether service has been made.

## 320.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office's response to incidents of domestic violence and violations of related court orders shall stress enforcement of the law to protect the victim and shall communicate the philosophy that domestic violence is criminal behavior. It is also the policy of this [department/office] to facilitate victims' and offenders' access to appropriate civil remedies and community resources whenever feasible.

## 320.3 OFFICER SAFETY

The investigation of domestic violence cases often places deputies in emotionally charged and sometimes highly dangerous environments. No provision of this policy is intended to supersede the responsibility of all deputies to exercise due caution and reasonable care in providing for the safety of any deputies and parties involved.

## 320.4 INVESTIGATIONS

The following guidelines should be followed by deputies when investigating domestic violence cases:

- (a) Calls of reported, threatened, imminent or ongoing domestic violence and the violation of any court order are of extreme importance and should be considered among the highest response priorities. This includes incomplete 9-1-1 calls.
- (b) When practicable, deputies should obtain and document statements from the victim, the suspect and any witnesses, including children, in or around the household or location of occurrence.
- (c) Deputies should list the full name and date of birth (and school if available) of each child who was present in the household at the time of the offense. The names of other children who may not have been in the house at that particular time should also be obtained for follow-up.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Domestic Violence*

---

- (d) When practicable and legally permitted, video or audio record all significant statements and observations.
- (e) All injuries should be photographed, regardless of severity, taking care to preserve the victim's personal privacy. Where practicable, photographs should be taken by a person of the same sex. Victims whose injuries are not visible at the time of the incident should be asked to contact the Detective Unit in the event that the injuries later become visible.
- (f) Deputies should request that the victim complete and sign an authorization for release of medical records related to the incident when applicable.
- (g) If the suspect is no longer at the scene, deputies should make reasonable efforts to locate the suspect to further the investigation, provide the suspect with an opportunity to make a statement and make an arrest or seek an arrest warrant if appropriate.
- (h) Seize any firearms or other dangerous weapons in the home, if appropriate and legally permitted, for safekeeping or as evidence. If the domestic violence involved threats of bodily harm, any firearm discovered in plain view or pursuant to consent or other lawful search must be taken into temporary custody (Penal Code § 18250).
- (i) When completing an incident or arrest report for violation of a court order, deputies should include specific information that establishes that the offender has been served, including the date the offender was served, the name of the agency that served the order and the provision of the order that the subject is alleged to have violated. When reasonably available, the arresting deputy should attach a copy of the order to the incident or arrest report.
- (j) Deputies should take appropriate enforcement action when there is probable cause to believe an offense has occurred. Factors that should not be used as sole justification for declining to take enforcement action include:
  - 1. Marital status of suspect and victim.
  - 2. Whether the suspect lives on the premises with the victim.
  - 3. Claims by the suspect that the victim provoked or perpetuated the violence.
  - 4. The potential financial or child custody consequences of arrest.
  - 5. The physical or emotional state of either party.
  - 6. Use of drugs or alcohol by either party.
  - 7. Denial that the abuse occurred where evidence indicates otherwise.
  - 8. A request by the victim not to arrest the suspect.
  - 9. Location of the incident (public/private).
  - 10. Speculation that the complainant may not follow through with the prosecution.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Domestic Violence*

---

11. The racial, cultural, social, professional position or sexual orientation of the victim or suspect.

#### **320.4.1 IF A SUSPECT IS ARRESTED**

If a suspect is arrested, deputies should:

- (a) Advise the victim that there is no guarantee the suspect will remain in custody.
- (b) Provide the victim's contact information to the jail staff to enable notification of the victim upon the suspect's release from jail.
- (c) Advise the victim whether any type of court order will be in effect when the suspect is released from jail.

#### **320.4.2 IF NO ARREST IS MADE**

If no arrest is made, the deputy should:

- (a) Advise the parties of any options, including but not limited to:
  1. Voluntary separation of the parties.
  2. Appropriate resource referrals (e.g., counselors, friends, relatives, shelter homes, victim witness unit).
- (b) Document the resolution in a report.

#### **320.5 VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

Victims may be traumatized or confused. Deputies should:

- (a) Recognize that a victim's behavior and actions may be affected.
- (b) Provide the victim with the [department/office]'s domestic violence information handout, even if the incident may not rise to the level of a crime.
- (c) Alert the victim to any available victim advocates, shelters and community resources.
- (d) Stand by for a reasonable amount of time when an involved person requests law enforcement assistance while removing essential items of personal property.
- (e) Seek medical assistance as soon as practicable for the victim if he/she has sustained injury or complains of pain.
- (f) Ask the victim whether he/she has a safe place to stay. Assist in arranging to transport the victim to an alternate shelter if the victim expresses a concern for his/her safety or if the deputy determines that a need exists.
- (g) Make reasonable efforts to ensure that children or dependent adults who are under the supervision of the suspect or victim are being properly cared for.
- (h) Seek or assist the victim in obtaining an emergency order if appropriate.

A deputy shall advise an individual protected by a Canadian domestic violence protection order of available local victim services (Family Code § 6452).

## *Domestic Violence*

---

### **320.5.1 TENANCY ISSUES**

The tenancy rights of residents involved in domestic violence incidents and, if applicable, the landlord(s) often pose difficult tenancy and property possession rights issues. Deputies will be familiar with both the applicable tenancy and property possessory laws as applicable to domestic violence situations.

### **320.6 DISPATCH ASSISTANCE**

All calls of domestic violence, including incomplete 9-1-1 calls, should be dispatched as soon as practicable.

Dispatchers are not required to verify the validity of a court order before responding to a request for assistance. Deputies should request that dispatchers check whether any of the involved persons are subject to the terms of a court order.

### **320.7 FOREIGN COURT ORDERS**

Various types of orders may be issued in domestic violence cases. Any foreign court order properly issued by a court of another state, Indian tribe or territory shall be enforced by deputies as if it were the order of a court in this state. An order should be considered properly issued when it reasonably appears that the issuing court has jurisdiction over the parties and reasonable notice and opportunity to respond was given to the party against whom the order was issued (18 USC § 2265). An otherwise valid out-of-state court order shall be enforced, regardless of whether the order has been properly registered with this state.

Canadian domestic violence protection orders shall also be enforced in the same manner as if issued in this state (Family Code § 6452).

### **320.8 VERIFICATION OF COURT ORDERS**

Determining the validity of a court order, particularly an order from another jurisdiction, can be challenging. Therefore, in determining whether there is probable cause to make an arrest for a violation of any court order, deputies should carefully review the actual order when available, and, where appropriate and practicable:

- (a) Ask the subject of the order about his/her notice or receipt of the order, his/her knowledge of its terms and efforts to respond to the order.
- (b) Check available records or databases that may show the status or conditions of the order.
- (c) Contact the issuing court to verify the validity of the order.
- (d) Contact a law enforcement official from the jurisdiction where the order was issued to verify information.

Deputies should document in an appropriate report their efforts to verify the validity of an order, regardless of whether an arrest is made. Deputies should contact a supervisor for clarification when needed.

## *Domestic Violence*

---

### 320.8.1 EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDERS

(a) Family Code § 6241 mandates the Superior Court to provide a judge, commissioner, or referee to hear applications and issue Emergency Protective Orders based on criteria outlined in Family Code § 6250(c). A judicial officer may issue an Emergency Protective Order whenever a law enforcement officer asserts reasonable grounds that:

1. A person is in immediate and present danger of domestic violence based upon the person's allegation of a recent incident of abuse or threat of abuse by the person against whom the order is sought.
2. A child is in immediate and present danger of abuse by a family or household member, based on an allegation of a recent incident of abuse or threat of abuse by the family or household member.
3. A child is in immediate and present danger of being abducted by a parent or relative, based on a reasonable belief that a person has intent to abduct child or flee with the child from the jurisdiction or based on an allegation of a reasonable threat to abduct the child or flee with the child from the jurisdiction.
4. An elder or dependent adult is in immediate and present danger of abuse as defined in Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.07 based on an allegation of a recent incident of abuse or threat of abuse by the person against whom the order is sought, except that no emergency protective order shall be issued based solely on an allegation of financial abuse.

(b) Under Penal Code § 646.91, a peace officer may also obtain an Emergency Protective Order when the officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a person or the person's immediate family is in immediate and present danger of being stalked.

1. Any such Emergency Protective Order shall be reduced to writing, signed by the deputy and include all of the information required by Penal Code § 646.91(c).
2. Any deputy seeking such an order shall serve the order on the restrained person if such person can be reasonably located and shall provide the person protected with a copy of the order. A copy of the order shall also be filed with the court as soon as practicable after issuance.
3. Any deputy requesting such an order shall carry copies of the order while on duty and shall use every reasonable means to enforce the order.

(c) Emergency Protective Orders may be obtained by telephone to prohibit a suspect who resides with a complainant, regardless of their marital status or relationship from:

1. Physically or verbally contacting the victim or disturbing his/her peace.
2. Remaining or returning to the victim's residence, regardless of who holds legal title to, or leases the residence.
3. Continuing a specified behavior as described in the order.

(d) Deputies investigating the scene of current or recent situations of domestic violence should remain cognizant of the potential for continued and escalated violence. An Emergency Protective

## *Domestic Violence*

---

Order should be sought if there is reason to believe, based on factual evidence such as a recent history of violence that the victim may still be in danger.

(e) Deputies should consider requesting an EPO if any of the following conditions exist: 1. The victim requests an EPO.

2. The investigating deputy has grounds to believe that there is an immediate danger of continuing violence against the victim.

3. The investigating deputy or victim believes that the suspect may be able to make bail and the potential for further violence exists.

### **320.8.2 FIREARMS/WEAPONS**

Deputies shall take into temporary custody any firearm or other deadly weapon in plain sight or discovered pursuant to a consensual search or other lawful search in a domestic violence incident and process it for safekeeping as authorized in Penal Code § 18250. In no event shall such a firearm or weapon be returned within less than 48 hours. If necessary, deputies may also obtain a search warrant for firearms or other deadly weapons that are subject to seizure under Penal Code § 1524(a)).

The deputy taking custody of any firearm or other deadly weapon shall issue the individual possessing such weapon a receipt fully describing the weapon (including any serial number) and indicate the location where the weapon may be recovered along with any applicable time limit for recovery.

No person who is the subject of an Emergency Protective Order (EPO) issued pursuant to Penal Code § 646.91 may own, possess, receive, purchase or attempt to purchase a firearm while such order is in effect. If necessary, deputies may also obtain a search warrant for firearms or other deadly weapons that are subject to seizure per the EPO (Penal Code § 1524.)

### **320.8.3 RETURN OF FIREARMS & WEAPONS**

Deputies are to advise the owner(s) of the seized weapon(s) to contact the Property Office regarding procedures for the return of their property.

## **320.9 LEGAL MANDATES AND RELEVANT LAWS**

California law provides the legal standards for enforcement of laws in domestic violence cases in the following subsection 320.9.1

### **320.9.1 STANDARDS FOR ARRESTS**

Deputies investigating a domestic violence report should consider the following:

- (a) An arrest should be made when there is probable cause to believe that a felony or misdemeanor domestic violence offense has been committed (Penal Code § 13701). Any decision to not arrest an adult when there is probable cause to do so requires supervisor approval.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Domestic Violence*

---

1. Deputies are only authorized to make an arrest without a warrant for a misdemeanor domestic violence offense if the deputy makes the arrest as soon as probable cause arises (Penal Code § 836).
- (b) A deputy responding to a domestic violence call who cannot make an arrest will advise the victim of his/her right to make a private person's arrest. The advisement should be made out of the presence of the suspect and shall include advising the victim how to safely execute the arrest. Deputies shall not dissuade victims from making a lawful private person's arrest. Deputies should refer to the provisions in the Private Persons Arrests Policy for options regarding the disposition of private person's arrests (Penal Code § 836(b)).
- (c) Deputies shall not cite and release a person for the following offenses (Penal Code § 853.6(a)(3)):
  1. Penal Code § 243(e)(1) (battery against spouse, cohabitant)
  2. Penal Code § 273.5 (corporal injury on spouse, cohabitant, fiancé/fiancée, person of a previous dating or engagement relationship, mother/father of the offender's child)
  3. Penal Code § 273.6 (violation of protective order) if violence or threats of violence have occurred or the suspect has gone to the workplace or residence of the protected party
  4. Penal Code § 646.9 (stalking)
  5. Other serious or violent felonies specified in Penal Code § 1270.1
- (d) In responding to domestic violence incidents, including mutual protective order violations, deputies should generally be reluctant to make dual arrests. Deputies shall make reasonable efforts to identify the dominant aggressor in any incident. The dominant aggressor is the person who has been determined to be the most significant, rather than the first, aggressor (Penal Code § 13701). In identifying the dominant aggressor, a deputy shall consider:
  1. The intent of the law to protect victims of domestic violence from continuing abuse.
  2. The threats creating fear of physical injury.
  3. The history of domestic violence between the persons involved.
  4. Whether either person acted in self-defense.
- (e) An arrest shall be made when there is probable cause to believe that a violation of a domestic violence court order has been committed (Penal Code § 13701; Penal Code § 836), regardless of whether the offense was committed in the deputy's presence. After arrest, the deputy shall confirm that a copy of the order has been registered, unless the victim provides a copy (Penal Code § 836).

#### 320.9.2 COURT ORDERS

- (a) A deputy who obtains an emergency protective order from the court shall serve it on the restrained person if the person can be reasonably located, and shall provide the

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Domestic Violence*

---

person protected or the person's parent/guardian with a copy of the order. The deputy shall file a copy with the court as soon as practicable and shall have the order entered into the computer database system for protective and restraining orders maintained by the Department of Justice (Family Code § 6271; Penal Code § 646.91).

- (b) At the request of the petitioner, a deputy at the scene of a reported domestic violence incident shall serve a court order on a restrained person (Family Code § 6383; Penal Code § 13710).
- (c) Any deputy serving a protective order that indicates that the respondent possesses weapons or ammunition shall request that the firearm/ammunition be immediately surrendered (Family Code § 6389(c)(2)).
- (d) During the service of a protective order any firearm discovered in plain view or pursuant to consent or other lawful search shall be taken into temporary custody (Penal Code § 18250).
- (e) If a valid Canadian order cannot be enforced because the person subject to the order has not been notified or served with the order, the deputy shall notify the protected individual that reasonable efforts shall be made to contact the person subject to the order. The deputy shall make a reasonable effort to inform the person subject to the order of the existence and terms of the order and provide him/her with a record of the order, if available, and shall allow the person a reasonable opportunity to comply with the order before taking enforcement action (Family Code § 6452).

#### 320.9.3 PUBLIC ACCESS TO POLICY

A copy of this domestic violence policy will be provided to members of the public upon request (Penal Code § 13701).

#### 320.9.4 REPORTS AND RECORDS

- (a) A written report shall be completed on all incidents of domestic violence. All such reports should be documented on the appropriate form, which includes information and notations specific to domestic violence incidents as required by Penal Code § 13730.
- (b) Reporting deputies should provide the victim with the case number of the report. The case number may be placed in the space provided on the domestic violence victim information handout provided to the victim. If the case number is not immediately available, an explanation should be given regarding how the victim can obtain the information at a later time.
- (c) Deputies who seize any firearm or other deadly weapon in a domestic violence incident shall issue the individual possessing such weapon a receipt and notice of where the weapon may be recovered, along with the applicable time limit for recovery (Penal Code § 18250; Penal Code § 33800; Family Code § 6389(c)(2)).

#### 320.9.5 RECORD-KEEPING AND DATA COLLECTION

This [department/office] shall maintain records of court orders related to domestic violence and the service status of each (Penal Code § 13710), as well as records on the number of domestic violence related calls reported to the [Department/Office], including whether weapons were used

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Domestic Violence*

---

in the incident or whether the incident involved strangulation or suffocation (Penal Code § 13730). This information is to be reported to the Attorney General monthly. It shall be the responsibility of the Records Supervisor to maintain and report this information as required.

### **320.9.6 DECLARATION IN SUPPORT OF BAIL INCREASE**

Any deputy who makes a warrantless arrest for a felony or misdemeanor violation of a domestic violence restraining order shall evaluate the totality of the circumstances to determine whether reasonable cause exists to seek an increased bail amount. If there is reasonable cause to believe that the scheduled bail amount is insufficient to assure the arrestee's appearance or to protect the victim or family member of a victim, the deputy shall prepare a declaration in support of increased bail (Penal Code § 1269c).

## Search and Seizure

### 322.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Both the federal and state Constitutions provide every individual with the right to be free from unreasonable searches and seizures. This policy provides general guidelines for Merced County Sheriff's Office personnel to consider when dealing with search and seizure issues.

### 322.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to respect the fundamental privacy rights of individuals. Members of this department will conduct searches in strict observance of the constitutional rights of persons being searched. All seizures by this department will comply with relevant federal and state law governing the seizure of persons and property.

In accordance with the Training Policy, the Department will provide relevant and current training to deputies as guidance for the application of current law, local community standards and prosecutorial considerations regarding specific search and seizure situations, as appropriate.

### 322.3 SEARCHES

The U.S. Constitution generally provides that a valid warrant is required in order for a search to be valid. There are, however, several exceptions that permit a warrantless search.

Examples of law enforcement activities that are exceptions to the general warrant requirement include, but are not limited to, searches pursuant to the following:

- Valid consent
- Incident to a lawful arrest
- Legitimate community caretaking interests
- Vehicle searches under certain circumstances
- Exigent circumstances

Certain other activities are recognized by federal and state courts and by certain statutes as legitimate law enforcement activities that also do not require a warrant. Such activities may include seizure and examination of abandoned property, and observations of activities and property located on open public areas.

Because case law regarding search and seizure is constantly changing and subject to interpretation by the courts, each member of this department is expected to act in each situation according to current training and his/her familiarity with clearly established rights as determined by case law.

Whenever practicable, deputies are encouraged to contact a supervisor to resolve questions regarding search and seizure issues prior to electing a course of action.

## *Search and Seizure*

---

### **322.4 SEARCH PROTOCOL**

Although conditions will vary and officer safety and other exigencies must be considered in every search situation, the following guidelines should be followed whenever circumstances permit:

- (a) Members of this department will strive to conduct searches with dignity and courtesy.
- (b) Deputies should explain to the person being searched the reason for the search and how the search will be conducted.
- (c) Searches should be carried out with due regard and respect for private property interests and in a manner that minimizes damage. Property should be left in a condition as close as reasonably possible to its pre-search condition.
- (d) In order to minimize the need for forcible entry, an attempt should be made to obtain keys, combinations or access codes when a search of locked property is anticipated.
- (e) When the person to be searched is of the opposite sex as the searching deputy, a reasonable effort should be made to summon a deputy of the same sex as the subject to conduct the search. When it is not practicable to summon a deputy of the same sex as the subject, the following guidelines should be followed:
  1. Another deputy or a supervisor should witness the search.
  2. The deputy should not search areas of the body covered by tight-fitting clothing, sheer clothing or clothing that could not reasonably conceal a weapon.

### **322.5 DOCUMENTATION**

Deputies are responsible to document any search and to ensure that any required reports are sufficient including, at minimum, documentation of the following:

- Reason for the search
- Any efforts used to minimize the intrusiveness of any search (e.g., asking for consent or keys)
- What, if any, injuries or damage occurred
- All steps taken to secure property
- The results of the search, including a description of any property or contraband seized
- If the person searched is the opposite sex, any efforts to summon a deputy of the same sex as the person being searched and the identification of any witness deputy

Supervisors shall review reports to ensure the reports are accurate, that actions are properly documented and that current legal requirements and department policy have been met.

## Temporary Custody of Juveniles

### 324.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines consistent with the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act for juveniles taken into temporary custody by members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office (34 USC § 11133).

Guidance regarding contacting juveniles at schools or who may be victims is provided in the Child Abuse Policy.

#### 324.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Juvenile non-offender** - An abused, neglected, dependent or alien juvenile who may be legally held for his/her own safety or welfare. This also includes any juvenile who may have initially been contacted for an offense that would not subject an adult to arrest (e.g., fine-only offense) but was taken into custody for his/her protection or for purposes of reuniting the juvenile with a parent, guardian or other responsible person.

**Juvenile offender** - A juvenile 17 years of age or younger who is alleged to have committed an offense that would subject an adult to arrest (a non-status offense). It also includes an offense under Penal Code § 29610 for underage possession of a handgun or concealable firearm (28 CFR 31.303).

**Non-secure custody** - When a juvenile is held in the presence of a deputy or other custody employee at all times and is not placed in a locked room, cell or behind any locked doors. Juveniles in non-secure custody may be handcuffed but not to a stationary or secure object. Personal supervision, through direct visual monitoring and audio two-way communication is maintained. Monitoring through electronic devices, such as video, does not replace direct visual observation (Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.1(d); 15 CCR 1150).

**Safety checks** - Direct, visual observation personally by a member of this [department/office] performed at random intervals within time frames prescribed in this policy to provide for the health and welfare of juveniles in temporary custody.

**Secure custody** - When a juvenile offender is held in a locked room, a set of rooms or a cell. Secure custody also includes being physically secured to a stationary object (15 CCR 1146).

Examples of secure custody include:

- (a) A juvenile left alone in an unlocked room within the secure perimeter of the adult temporary holding area.
- (b) A juvenile handcuffed to a rail.
- (c) A juvenile placed in a room that contains doors with delayed egress devices that have a delay of more than 30 seconds.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

- (d) A juvenile being processed in a secure booking area when a non-secure booking area is available.
- (e) A juvenile left alone in a secure booking area after being photographed and fingerprinted.
- (f) A juvenile placed in a cell within the adult temporary holding area, whether or not the cell door is locked.

**Sight and sound separation** - Located or arranged to prevent physical, visual or auditory contact.

**Status offender** - A juvenile suspected of committing a criminal violation of the law that would not be a criminal violation but for the age of the offender. Examples may include running away, underage possession of tobacco, curfew violation and truancy. A juvenile in custody on a court order or warrant based upon a status offense is also a status offender. This includes the habitually disobedient or truant juvenile under Welfare and Institutions Code § 601 and any juvenile suspected of an offense that would not subject an adult to arrest (e.g., fine-only offense).

#### **324.2 POLICY**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to releasing juveniles from temporary custody as soon as reasonably practicable and keeping juveniles safe while they are in temporary custody at the Merced County Sheriff's Office. Juveniles should be held in temporary custody only for as long as reasonably necessary for processing, transfer or release.

#### **324.3 JUVENILES WHO SHOULD NOT BE HELD**

Juveniles who exhibit any of the following conditions should not be held at the Merced County Sheriff's Office:

- (a) Unconscious
- (b) Seriously injured
- (c) A known suicide risk or obviously severely emotionally disturbed
- (d) Significantly intoxicated except when approved by a field supervisor. A medical clearance shall be obtained for minors who are under the influence of drugs, alcohol or any other intoxicating substance to the extent that they are unable to care for themselves (15 CCR 1151).
- (e) Extremely violent or continuously violent

Deputies taking custody of a juvenile who exhibits any of the above conditions should take reasonable steps to provide medical attention or mental health assistance and notify a supervisor of the situation (15 CCR 1142; 15 CCR 1151).

These juveniles should not be held at the Merced County Sheriff's Office unless they have been evaluated by a qualified medical and/or mental health professional (15 CCR 1142).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

If the deputy taking custody of the juvenile believes the juvenile may be a suicide risk, the juvenile shall be under continuous direct supervision until evaluation, release or a transfer is completed (15 CCR 1142).

#### **324.3.1 EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE OF JUVENILES IN CUSTODY**

When emergency medical attention is required for a juvenile, medical assistance will be called immediately. The appropriate supervisor shall be notified of the need for medical attention for the juvenile. [Department/Office] members should administer first aid as applicable (15 CCR 1142).

#### **324.3.2 SUICIDE PREVENTION OF JUVENILES IN CUSTODY**

[Department/Office] members should be alert to potential symptoms based upon exhibited behavior that may indicate the juvenile is a suicide risk. These symptoms may include depression, refusal to communicate, verbally threatening to kill him/herself or any unusual behavior which may indicate the juvenile may harm him/herself while in either secure or non-secure custody (15 CCR 1142).

#### **324.4 CUSTODY OF JUVENILES**

Deputies should take custody of a juvenile and temporarily hold the juvenile at the Merced County Sheriff's Office when there is no other lawful and practicable alternative to temporary custody. Refer to the Child Abuse Policy for additional information regarding detaining a juvenile that is suspected of being a victim.

No juvenile should be held in temporary custody at the Merced County Sheriff's Office without authorization of the arresting deputy's supervisor or, if unavailable, another patrol or detective supervisor. Juveniles taken into custody shall be held in non-secure custody unless otherwise authorized by this policy.

Any juvenile taken into custody shall be released to the care of the juvenile's parent or other responsible adult or transferred to a juvenile custody facility or to other authority as soon as practicable and in no event shall a juvenile be held beyond six hours from the time of his/her entry into the Merced County Sheriff's Office ( 34 USC § 11133; Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.1(d)).

#### **324.4.1 CUSTODY OF JUVENILE NON-OFFENDERS**

Non-offenders taken into protective custody in compliance with the Child Abuse Policy should generally not be held at the Merced County Sheriff's Office. Custodial arrangements should be made for non-offenders as soon as reasonably possible. Juvenile non-offenders shall not be held in secure custody (34 USC § 11133; Welfare and Institutions Code § 206).

#### **324.4.2 CUSTODY OF JUVENILE STATUS OFFENDERS**

Status offenders should generally be released by citation or with a warning rather than taken into temporary custody. However, deputies may take custody of a status offender if requested to do so by a parent or legal guardian in order to facilitate reunification (e.g., transported home or to

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

the station to await a parent). Juvenile status offenders shall not be held in secure custody (34 USC § 11133).

#### **324.4.3 CUSTODY OF JUVENILE OFFENDERS**

Juvenile offenders should be held in non-secure custody while at the Merced County Sheriff's Office unless another form of custody is authorized by this policy or is necessary due to exigent circumstances.

Generally, a juvenile offender may be taken into custody when authorized by a court order or when there is probable cause to believe the juvenile has committed an offense that would subject an adult to arrest (Welfare and Institutions Code § 625).

A juvenile offender who is 14 years of age or older and suspected of using a firearm in violation of Welfare and Institutions Code § 625.3 shall be transported to a juvenile facility.

A juvenile offender suspected of committing murder or a sex offense that may subject a juvenile to criminal jurisdiction under Welfare and Institutions Code § 602(b), or a serious or violent felony should be referred to a probation officer for a decision on further detention.

In all other cases the juvenile offender may be:

- (a) Released upon warning or citation.
- (b) Released to a parent or other responsible adult after processing at the [Department/Office].
- (c) Referred to a probation officer for a decision regarding whether to transport the juvenile offender to a juvenile facility.
- (d) Transported to his/her home or to the place where the juvenile offender was taken into custody (Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.2).

In determining which disposition is appropriate, the investigating deputy or supervisor shall prefer the alternative which least restricts the juvenile's freedom of movement, provided that alternative is compatible with the best interests of the juvenile and the community (Welfare and Institutions Code § 626).

Whenever a juvenile offender under the age of 14 is taken into custody, the deputy should take reasonable steps to verify and document the child's ability to differentiate between right and wrong, particularly in relation to the alleged offense (Penal Code § 26).

#### **324.5 ADVISEMENTS**

Deputies shall take immediate steps to notify the juvenile's parent, guardian or a responsible relative that the juvenile is in custody, the location where the juvenile is being held and the intended disposition (Welfare and Institutions Code § 627).

Whenever a juvenile is taken into temporary custody, he/she shall be given the *Miranda* rights advisement regardless of whether questioning is intended (Welfare and Institutions Code § 625).

## *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

Anytime a juvenile offender is placed in secure custody, he/she shall be informed of the purpose of the secure custody, the length of time the secure custody is expected to last and of the maximum six-hour limitation (Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.1(d)).

Juveniles taken into custody for an offense shall immediately be advised (or at least within one hour from being taken into custody, if possible) that they may make three telephone calls: one call completed to his/her parent or guardian; one to a responsible relative or his/her employer; and another call completed to an attorney. The calls shall be at no expense to the juvenile when completed to telephone numbers within the local calling area. Juveniles should be asked whether they are a caregiver and provided two more phone calls in the same manner as provided to adults in the Temporary Custody of Adults Policy (Welfare and Institutions Code § 627; Penal Code § 851.5).

### **324.6 JUVENILE CUSTODY LOGS**

Any time a juvenile is held in custody at the Department, the custody shall be promptly and properly documented in the juvenile custody log, including:

- (a) Identifying information about the juvenile being held.
- (b) Date and time of arrival and release from the Merced County Sheriff's Office (15 CCR 1150).
- (c) Supervisor notification and approval to temporarily hold the juvenile.
- (d) Any charges for which the juvenile is being held and classification of the juvenile as a juvenile offender, status offender or non-offender.
- (e) Any changes in status.
- (f) Time of all safety checks.
- (g) Any medical and other screening requested and completed (15 CCR 1142).
- (h) Circumstances that justify any secure custody (Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.1(d); 15 CCR 1145).
- (i) Any other information that may be required by other authorities, such as compliance inspectors or a local juvenile court authority.

The appropriate supervisor shall initial the log to approve the custody, including any secure custody, and shall also initial the log when the juvenile is released.

### **324.7 NO-CONTACT REQUIREMENTS**

Sight and sound separation shall be maintained between all juveniles and adults while in custody at the [Department/Office] (34 USC § 11133; Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.1(d); Welfare and Institutions Code § 208; 15 CCR 1144). There should also be sight and sound separation between non-offenders and juvenile and status offenders.

## *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

In situations where brief or accidental contact may occur (e.g., during the brief time a juvenile is being fingerprinted and/or photographed in booking), a member of the Merced County Sheriff's Office (trained in the supervision of persons in custody) shall maintain a constant, immediate, side-by-side presence with the juvenile or the adult to minimize any contact. If inadvertent or accidental contact does occur, reasonable efforts shall be taken to end the contact (15 CCR 1144).

### **324.8 TEMPORARY CUSTODY REQUIREMENTS**

Members and supervisors assigned to monitor or process any juvenile at the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall ensure the following:

- (a) A supervisor should be notified if it is anticipated that a juvenile may need to remain at the Merced County Sheriff's Office more than four hours. This will enable the supervisor to ensure no juvenile is held at the Merced County Sheriff's Office more than six hours.
- (b) A staff member of the same sex shall supervise personal hygiene activities and care, such as changing clothing or using the restroom, without direct observation to allow for privacy.
- (c) Personal safety checks and significant incidents/activities shall be noted on the log.
- (d) There shall be no viewing devices, such as peep holes or mirrors, of which the juvenile is not aware. Therefore, an employee should inform a juvenile under his/her care that the juvenile will be monitored at all times, unless he/she is using the toilet. This does not apply to surreptitious and legally obtained recorded interrogations.
- (e) Juveniles shall have reasonable access to toilets and wash basins (15 CCR 1143).
- (f) Food shall be provided if a juvenile has not eaten within the past four hours or is otherwise in need of nourishment, including any special diet required for the health of the juvenile (15 CCR 1143).
- (g) Juveniles shall have reasonable access to a drinking fountain or water (15 CCR 1143).
- (h) Juveniles shall have reasonable opportunities to stand and stretch, particularly if handcuffed or restrained in any way.
- (i) Juveniles shall have privacy during family, guardian and/or lawyer visits (15 CCR 1143).
- (j) Juveniles shall be permitted to remain in their personal clothing unless the clothing is taken as evidence or is otherwise unsuitable or inadequate for continued wear while in custody (15 CCR 1143).
- (k) Blankets shall be provided as reasonably necessary (15 CCR 1143).
- (l) Adequate shelter, heat, light and ventilation should be provided without compromising security or enabling escape.

## *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

- (m) Juveniles shall have adequate furnishings, including suitable chairs or benches.
- (n) Juveniles shall have the right to the same number of telephone calls as an adult in custody.
- (o) No discipline may be administered to any juvenile, nor may juveniles be subjected to corporal or unusual punishment, humiliation or mental abuse (15 CCR 1142).

### **324.9 USE OF RESTRAINT DEVICES**

Juvenile offenders may be handcuffed in accordance with the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy. A juvenile offender may be handcuffed at the Merced County Sheriff's Office when the juvenile presents a heightened risk. However, non-offenders and status offenders should not be handcuffed unless they are combative or threatening (15 CCR 1142).

Other restraints shall only be used after less restrictive measures have failed and, if practical, with the approval of a supervisor. Restraints shall only be used so long as it reasonably appears necessary for the juvenile's protection or the protection of others (15 CCR 1142).

Juveniles in restraints shall be kept away from other unrestrained juveniles or monitored in such a way as to protect the juvenile from abuse (15 CCR 1142).

### **324.10 PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The deputy taking custody of a juvenile offender or status offender at the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall ensure a thorough search of the juvenile's property is made and all property is removed from the juvenile, especially those items that could compromise safety, such as pens, pencils and belts.

The personal property of a juvenile should be placed in a property bag. The property should be inventoried in the juvenile's presence and sealed into the bag. The property should be kept in a monitored or secure location until the juvenile is released from the custody of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

### **324.11 SECURE CUSTODY**

Only juvenile offenders *14 years of age or older may be placed in secure custody (Welfare and Institutions Code § 207; 15 CCR 1145). Supervisory approval, if practical, is required before placing a juvenile offender in secure custody.*

*Secure custody should only be used for juvenile offenders when there is a reasonable belief that the juvenile is a serious risk of harm to him/herself or others. Factors to be considered when determining if the juvenile offender presents a serious security risk to him/herself or others include the following (15 CCR 1145):*

- (a) *Age, maturity and delinquent history*
- (b) *Severity of offense for which the juvenile was taken into custody*

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

- (c) *The juvenile offender's behavior*
- (d) *Availability of staff to provide adequate supervision or protection of the juvenile offender*
- (e) *Age, type and number of other individuals in custody at the facility*

*Members of this [department/office] shall not use secure custody for convenience when non-secure custody is, or later becomes, a reasonable option (15 CCR 1145).*

*When practicable and when no locked enclosure is available, handcuffing one hand of a juvenile offender to a fixed object while otherwise maintaining the juvenile in non-secure custody should be considered as the method of secure custody. An employee must be present at all times to ensure the juvenile's safety while secured to a stationary object (15 CCR 1148).*

*Juveniles shall not be secured to a stationary object for more than 60 minutes. Supervisor approval is required to secure a juvenile to a stationary object for longer than 60 minutes and every 30 minutes thereafter (15 CCR 1148). Supervisor approval should be documented.*

*The decision for securing a minor to a stationary object for longer than 60 minutes and every 30 minutes thereafter shall be based upon the best interests of the juvenile offender (15 CCR 1148).*

#### 324.11.1 LOCKED ENCLOSURES

A thorough inspection of the area shall be conducted before placing a juvenile into the enclosure. A second inspection shall be conducted after removing the juvenile. Any damage noted to the room should be photographed and documented in the crime report.

The following requirements shall apply to a juvenile offender who is held inside a locked enclosure:

- (a) The juvenile shall constantly be monitored by an audio/video system during the entire custody.
- (b) Juveniles shall have constant auditory access to [department/office] members (15 CCR 1147).
- (c) Initial placement into and removal from a locked enclosure shall be logged (Welfare and Institutions Code § 207.1(d)).
- (d) Unscheduled safety checks to provide for the health and welfare of the juvenile by a staff member, no less than once every 15 minutes, shall occur (15 CCR 1147; 15 CCR 1151).
  - 1. All safety checks shall be logged.
  - 2. The safety check should involve questioning the juvenile as to his/her well-being (sleeping juveniles or apparently sleeping juveniles should be awakened).
  - 3. Requests or concerns of the juvenile should be logged.
- (e) Males and females shall not be placed in the same locked room (15 CCR 1147).

## *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

- (f) Juvenile offenders should be separated according to severity of the crime (e.g., felony or misdemeanor).
- (g) Restrained juveniles shall not be mixed in a cell or room with unrestrained juveniles.

### **324.12 SUICIDE ATTEMPT, DEATH OR SERIOUS INJURY OF A JUVENILE**

The Patrol Lieutenant will ensure procedures are in place to address the suicide attempt, death or serious injury of any juvenile held at the Merced County Sheriff's Office (15 CCR 1142; 15 CCR 1047). The procedures will address:

- (a) Immediate notification of the on-duty supervisor, Sheriff and Investigation Division Supervisor.
- (b) Notification of the parent, guardian or person standing in loco parentis, of the juvenile.
- (c) Notification of the appropriate prosecutor.
- (d) Notification of the County attorney.
- (e) Notification to the coroner.
- (f) Notification of the juvenile court.
- (g) In the case of a death, providing a report to the Attorney General under Government Code § 12525 within 10 calendar days of the death, and forwarding the same report to the Board of State and Community Corrections within the same time frame (15 CCR 1046).
- (h) A medical and operational review of deaths and suicide attempts pursuant to 15 CCR 1046.
- (i) Evidence preservation.

### **324.13 INTERVIEWING OR INTERROGATING JUVENILE SUSPECTS**

No interview or interrogation of a juvenile should occur unless the juvenile has the apparent capacity to consent, and does consent to an interview or interrogation.

It shall be the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to NOT conduct CUSTODIAL interrogations or interviews with juveniles 15 years of age or younger without first consulting with the Detective Unit Supervisor and Lieutenant. If the custodial interview or interrogation is approved the following guidelines and statutes apply.

Prior to conducting a custodial interrogation, including the waiver of *Miranda* rights, a deputy shall permit a juvenile 15 years of age or younger to consult with legal counsel in person, by telephone or by video conference. The consultation may not be waived by the juvenile. The requirement to consult with legal counsel does not apply when (Welfare and Institutions Code § 625.6):

- (a) Information is necessary to protect life or property from an imminent threat.
- (b) The questions are limited to what is reasonably necessary to obtain the information relating to the threat.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

### 324.13.1 MANDATORY RECORDINGS OF JUVENILES

Any interrogation of an individual under 18 years of age who is in custody and suspected of committing murder shall be audio and video recorded when the interview takes place at a [department/office] facility, jail, detention facility or other fixed place of detention. The recording shall include the entire interview and a *Miranda* advisement preceding the interrogation (Penal Code § 859.5).

This recording is not mandatory when (Penal Code § 859.5):

- (a) Recording is not feasible because of exigent circumstances that are later documented in a report.
- (b) The individual refuses to have the interrogation recorded, including a refusal any time during the interrogation, and the refusal is documented in a report. If feasible, the refusal shall be electronically recorded.
- (c) The custodial interrogation occurred in another state by law enforcement officers of that state, unless the interrogation was conducted with the intent to avoid the requirements of Penal Code § 859.5.
- (d) The interrogation occurs when no member conducting the interrogation has a reason to believe that the individual may have committed murder. Continued custodial interrogation concerning that offense shall be electronically recorded if the interrogating member develops a reason to believe the individual committed murder.
- (e) The interrogation would disclose the identity of a confidential informant or would jeopardize the safety of a deputy, the individual being interrogated or another individual. Such circumstances shall be documented in a report.
- (f) A recording device fails despite reasonable maintenance and the timely repair or replacement is not feasible.
- (g) The questions are part of a routine processing or booking, and are not an interrogation.
- (h) The suspect is in custody for murder and the interrogation is unrelated to a murder. However, if any information concerning a murder is mentioned during the interrogation, the remainder of the interrogation shall be recorded.

These recordings shall be retained until a conviction is final and all direct and habeas corpus appeals are exhausted, a court no longer has any jurisdiction over the individual or the prosecution for that offense is barred (Penal Code § 859.5; Welfare and Institutions Code § 626.8).

### 324.14 FORMAL BOOKING

No juvenile offender shall be formally booked without the authorization of the arresting deputy's supervisor, or in his/her absence, the Patrol Lieutenant.

Any juvenile, 14 years of age or older, who is taken into custody for a felony, or any juvenile whose acts amount to a sex crime, shall be booked, fingerprinted and photographed.

For all other acts defined as crimes, juveniles may be booked, fingerprinted or photographed upon the approval from the Patrol Lieutenant or Detective Unit supervisor, giving due consideration to the following:

## *Temporary Custody of Juveniles*

---

- (a) The gravity of the offense
- (b) The past record of the offender
- (c) The age of the offender

### **324.15 RELEASE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING JUVENILES**

Court decisions and legislation have combined to carefully specify situations in which information may be given out or exchanged when a case involves a juvenile. Members of this [department/office] shall not divulge any information regarding juveniles unless they are certain of the legal authority to do so.

A copy of the current policy of the juvenile court concerning authorized release of information and appropriate acknowledgment forms shall be kept with copies of this procedure in the Merced County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual. Such releases are authorized by Welfare and Institutions Code § 827.

Welfare and Institutions Code § 828 authorizes the release of certain information to other agencies. It shall be the responsibility of the Records Supervisor and the appropriate Detective Unit supervisors to ensure that personnel of those bureaus act within legal guidelines.

### **324.16 BOARD OF STATE AND COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS CERTIFICATION**

The Corrections Captain shall coordinate the procedures related to the custody of juveniles held at the Merced County Sheriff's Office and ensure any required certification is maintained (Welfare and Institution Code § 210.2).

### **324.17 RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION**

Juveniles have the right to the same religious accommodation as adults in temporary custody (see the Temporary Custody of Adults Policy).

# Adult Abuse

## 326.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the investigation and reporting of suspected abuse of certain adults who may be more vulnerable than others. This policy also addresses mandatory notification for Merced County Sheriff's Office members as required by law.

### 326.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Adult abuse** - Any offense or attempted offense involving violence or neglect of an adult victim when committed by a person responsible for the adult's care, or any other act that would mandate reporting or notification to a social service agency or law enforcement (Penal Code § 368).

## 326.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will investigate all reported incidents of alleged adult abuse and ensure proper reporting and notification as required by law.

## 326.3 INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTING

All reported or suspected cases of adult abuse require investigation and a report, even if the allegations appear unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Investigations and reports related to suspected cases of adult abuse should address, as applicable:

- (a) The overall basis for the contact. This should be done by the investigating deputy in all circumstances where a suspected adult abuse victim is contacted.
- (b) Any relevant statements the victim may have made and to whom he/she made the statements.
- (c) If a person is taken into protective custody, the reasons, the name and title of the person making the decision, and why other alternatives were not appropriate.
- (d) Documentation of any visible injuries or any injuries identified by the victim. This should include photographs of such injuries, if practicable.
- (e) Whether the victim was transported for medical treatment or a medical examination.
- (f) Whether the victim identified a household member as the alleged perpetrator, and a list of the names of any other potential victims or witnesses who may reside in the residence.
- (g) Identification of any prior related reports or allegations of abuse, including other jurisdictions, as reasonably known.
- (h) Previous addresses of the victim and suspect.
- (i) Other potential witnesses who have not yet been interviewed, such as relatives or others close to the victim's environment.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Adult Abuse*

---

- (j) Results of investigations shall be provided to those agencies (Adult Protective Services (APS), long-term ombudsman) that referred or reported the adult abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15640(f)).
- (k) Whether a death involved the End of Life Option Act:
  - 1. Whether or not assistance was provided to the person beyond that allowed by law (Health and Safety Code § 443.14)
  - 2. Whether an individual knowingly altered or forged a request for an aid-in-dying drug to end a person's life without his/her authorization, or concealed or destroyed a withdrawal or rescission of a request for an aid-in-dying drug (Health and Safety Code § 443.17)
  - 3. Whether coercion or undue influence was exerted on the person to request or ingest an aid-in-dying drug or to destroy a withdrawal or rescission of a request for such medication (Health and Safety Code § 443.17)
  - 4. Whether an aid-in-dying drug was administered to a person without his/her knowledge or consent (Health and Safety Code § 443.17).

Any unexplained death of an adult who was in the care of a guardian or caretaker should be considered as potential adult abuse and investigated similarly.

#### **326.4 QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS**

Qualified investigators should be available to investigate cases of adult abuse. These investigators should:

- (a) Conduct interviews in appropriate interview facilities.
- (b) Be familiar with forensic interview techniques specific to adult abuse investigations.
- (c) Present all cases of alleged adult abuse to the prosecutor for review.
- (d) Coordinate with other enforcement agencies, social service agencies and facility administrators as needed.
- (e) Provide referrals to therapy services, victim advocates, guardians and support for the victim and family as appropriate.
- (f) Participate in or coordinate with multidisciplinary investigative teams as applicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.55).

#### **326.5 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION**

Members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall notify the local office of the California Department of Social Services (CDSS) APS agency when they reasonably suspect, have observed or have knowledge of an incident that reasonably appears to be abuse of an elder (age 65 or older) or dependent adult, or are told by an elder or dependent adult that he/she has experienced abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).

Notification shall be made by telephone as soon as practicable and a written report shall be provided within two working days as provided in Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)(c)).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Adult Abuse*

---

A dependent adult is an individual, between 18 and 64 years of age, who has physical or mental limitations that restrict his/her ability to carry out normal activities or to protect his/her rights including, but not limited to, persons who have physical or developmental disabilities or whose physical or mental abilities have diminished because of age. This also includes those admitted as inpatients to a 24-hour health facility, as defined in state law (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.23).

For purposes of notification, abuse is physical abuse, abandonment, abduction, isolation, financial abuse or neglect. Physical abuse includes any assault or sex crime (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.63). Financial abuse includes taking personal or real property by undue influence or intent to defraud (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15610.30).

Notification shall also be made to the following agencies as soon as practicable or as provided below (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630):

- (a) If the abuse is physical abuse and occurred in a long-term care facility (not a state mental health hospital or a state developmental center) notification shall be made as follows (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)(1)):
  - 1. If there is serious bodily injury, notification shall be made by telephone and, within two hours, a written report shall be made to the local ombudsman and the corresponding licensing agency.
  - 2. If there is physical abuse and no serious bodily injury, notification shall be made by telephone and, within 24 hours, a written report shall be made to the local ombudsman and the corresponding licensing agency.
  - 3. If the abuse is allegedly caused by a resident with dementia and there is no serious bodily injury, notification shall be made by telephone and a written report to the local ombudsman within 24 hours.
  - 4. When a report of abuse is received by the [Department/Office], local ombudsman shall be called to coordinate efforts to provide the most immediate and appropriate response (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
- (b) If the abuse is in a long-term care facility (not a state mental health or a state developmental center) and is other than physical abuse, a telephone report and a written report shall be made to the local ombudsman as soon as practicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
- (c) The California Department of Public Health (DPH) shall be notified of all known or suspected abuse in a long-term care facility.
- (d) The SDSS shall be notified of all known or suspected abuse occurring in a residential care facility for the elderly or in an adult day program.
- (e) If the abuse occurred in an adult day health care center, DPH and the California Department of Aging shall be notified.
- (f) The Bureau of Medi-Cal Fraud and Elder Abuse shall be notified of all abuse that constitutes criminal activity in a long-term care facility.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Adult Abuse

---

- (g) The District Attorney's office shall be notified of all cases of physical abuse and financial abuse in a long-term care facility.
- (h) If the abuse occurred at a state mental hospital or a state developmental center, notification shall be made to the designated investigators of the California Department of State Hospitals or the California Department of Developmental Services as soon as practicable but no later than two hours after law enforcement becomes aware of the abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
  - 1. When a report of abuse is received by the [Department/Office], Investigation efforts shall be coordinated with the designated investigators of the California Department of State Hospitals or the California Department of Developmental Services (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b)).
- (i) If during an investigation it is determined that the adult abuse is being committed by a licensed health practitioner as identified in Welfare and Institutions Code 15640(b), the appropriate licensing agency shall be immediately notified (Welfare and Institutions Code 15640(b)).
- (j) When the [Department/Office] receives a report of abuse, neglect or abandonment of an elder or dependent adult alleged to have occurred in a long-term care facility, the licensing agency shall be notified by telephone as soon as practicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15640(e)).

The Detective Unit supervisor is responsible for ensuring that proper notifications have occurred to the District Attorney's Office and any other regulatory agency that may be applicable based upon where the abuse took place (e.g., care facility, hospital) per Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(b).

Notification is not required for a person who was merely present when a person self-administered a prescribed aid-in-dying drug or a person prepared an aid-in-dying drug so long as the person did not assist the individual in ingesting the aid-in-dying drug (Health and Safety Code § 443.14; Health and Safety Code § 443.18).

#### 326.5.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Notification should include the following information, if known (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630(e)):

- (a) The name of the person making the report.
- (b) The name and age of the elder or dependent adult.
- (c) The present location of the elder or dependent adult.
- (d) The names and addresses of family members or any other adult responsible for the care of the elder or dependent adult.
- (e) The nature and extent of the condition of the elder or dependent adult.
- (f) The date of incident.
- (g) Any other information, including information that led the person to suspect elder or dependent adult abuse.

## *Adult Abuse*

---

### **326.6 PROTECTIVE CUSTODY**

Before taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody when facts indicate the adult may not be able to care for him/herself, the deputy should make reasonable attempts to contact APS. Generally, removal of an adult abuse victim from his/her family, guardian or other responsible adult should be left to the welfare authorities when they are present or have become involved in an investigation.

Generally, members of this department should remove an adult abuse victim from his/her family or guardian without a court order only when no other effective alternative is reasonably available and immediate action reasonably appears necessary to protect the victim. Prior to taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody, the deputy should take reasonable steps to deliver the adult to another qualified legal guardian, unless it reasonably appears that the release would endanger the victim or result in abduction. If this is not a reasonable option, the deputy shall ensure that the adult is delivered to APS.

Whenever practicable, the deputy should inform a supervisor of the circumstances prior to taking an adult abuse victim into protective custody. If prior notification is not practicable, deputies should contact a supervisor promptly after taking the adult into protective custody.

When adult abuse victims are under state control, have a state-appointed guardian or there are other legal holdings for guardianship, it may be necessary or reasonable to seek a court order on behalf of the adult victim to either remove the adult from a dangerous environment (protective custody) or restrain a person from contact with the adult.

#### **326.6.1 EMERGENCY PROTECTIVE ORDERS**

In any situation which a deputy reasonably believes that an elder or dependent adult is in immediate and present danger of abuse based on an allegation of a recent incident of abuse or threat of abuse (other than financial abuse alone), the deputy may seek an emergency protective order against the person alleged to have committed or threatened such abuse (Family Code § 6250(d)).

### **326.7 INTERVIEWS**

#### **326.7.1 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS**

Absent extenuating circumstances or impracticality, deputies should audio record the preliminary interview with a suspected adult abuse victim. Deputies should avoid multiple interviews with the victim and should attempt to gather only the information necessary to begin an investigation. When practicable, investigating deputies should defer interviews until a person who is specially trained in such interviews is available.

#### **326.7.2 DETAINING VICTIMS FOR INTERVIEWS**

A deputy should not detain an adult involuntarily who is suspected of being a victim of abuse solely for the purpose of an interview or physical exam without his/her consent or the consent of a guardian unless one of the following applies:

## Adult Abuse

---

- (a) Exigent circumstances exist, such as:
  - 1. A reasonable belief that medical issues of the adult need to be addressed immediately.
  - 2. A reasonable belief that the adult is or will be in danger of harm if the interview or physical exam is not immediately completed.
  - 3. The alleged offender is a family member or guardian and there is reason to believe the adult may be in continued danger.
- (b) A court order or warrant has been issued.

### **326.8 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

When an adult abuse investigation requires a medical examination, the investigating deputy should obtain consent for such examination from the victim, guardian, agency or entity having legal custody of the adult. The deputy should also arrange for the adult's transportation to the appropriate medical facility.

In cases where the alleged offender is a family member, guardian, agency or entity having legal custody and is refusing to give consent for the medical examination, deputies should notify a supervisor before proceeding. If exigent circumstances do not exist or if state law does not provide for deputies to take the adult for a medical examination, the supervisor should consider other government agencies or services that may obtain a court order for such an examination.

### **326.9 DRUG-ENDANGERED VICTIMS**

A coordinated response by law enforcement and social services agencies is appropriate to meet the immediate and longer-term medical and safety needs of an adult abuse victim who has been exposed to the manufacturing, trafficking or use of narcotics.

#### **326.9.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Detective Unit supervisor should:

- (a) Work with professionals from the appropriate agencies, including APS, other law enforcement agencies, medical service providers and local prosecutors, to develop community specific procedures for responding to situations where there are adult abuse victims endangered by exposure to methamphetamine labs or the manufacture and trafficking of other drugs.
- (b) Activate any available interagency response when a deputy notifies the Detective Unit supervisor that he/she has responded to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where an adult abuse victim is present or where evidence indicates that an adult abuse victim lives.
- (c) Develop a report format or checklist for use when deputies respond to drug labs or other narcotics crime scenes. The checklist will help deputies document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions that may affect the adult.

## *Adult Abuse*

---

### 326.9.2 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Deputies responding to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where an adult abuse victim is present or where there is evidence that an adult abuse victim lives should:

- (a) Document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions of the adult, using photography as appropriate and the checklist or form developed for this purpose.
- (b) Notify the Detective Unit supervisor so an interagency response can begin.

### 326.10 STATE MANDATES AND OTHER RELEVANT LAWS

California requires or permits the following:

#### 326.10.1 RECORDS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Records Division is responsible for:

- (a) Providing a copy of the adult abuse report to the APS, ombudsman or other agency as applicable within two working days or as required by law (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15630; Welfare and Institutions Code § 15640(c)).
- (b) Retaining the original adult abuse report with the initial case file.

### 326.11 TRAINING

The Department should provide training on best practices in adult abuse investigations to members tasked with investigating these cases. The training should include:

- (a) Participating in multidisciplinary investigations, as appropriate.
- (b) Conducting interviews.
- (c) Availability of therapy services for adults and families.
- (d) Availability of specialized forensic medical exams.
- (e) Cultural competence (including interpretive services) related to adult abuse investigations.
- (f) Availability of victim advocates or other support.

# Discriminatory Harassment

## 328.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to prevent [department/office] members from being subjected to discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation. Nothing in this policy is intended to create a legal or employment right or duty that is not created by law.

## 328.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is an equal opportunity employer and is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment that is free of all forms of discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment and retaliation (Government Code § 12940(k); 2 CCR 11023). The [Department/Office] will not tolerate discrimination against a member in hiring, promotion, discharge, compensation, fringe benefits and other privileges of employment. The [Department/Office] will take preventive and corrective action to address any behavior that violates this policy or the rights it is designed to protect.

The nondiscrimination policies of the [Department/Office] may be more comprehensive than state or federal law. Conduct that violates this policy may not violate state or federal law but still could subject a member to discipline.

## 328.3 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

### 328.3.1 DISCRIMINATION

The [Department/Office] prohibits all forms of discrimination, including any employment-related action by a member that adversely affects an applicant or member and is based on the actual or perceived race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, disability, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, marital status and other classifications protected by law.

Discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment, is verbal or physical conduct that demeans or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual based upon that individual's protected class. It has the effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating a hostile or abusive work environment.

Conduct that may, under certain circumstances, constitute discriminatory harassment, can include making derogatory comments, crude and offensive statements or remarks; making slurs or off-color jokes, stereotyping; engaging in threatening acts; making indecent gestures, pictures, cartoons, posters or material; making inappropriate physical contact; or using written material or [department/office] equipment and/or systems to transmit or receive offensive material, statements or pictures. Such conduct is contrary to [department/office] policy and to a work environment that is free of discrimination.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Discriminatory Harassment*

---

### 328.3.2 SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The [Department/Office] prohibits all forms of discrimination and discriminatory harassment, including sexual harassment. It is unlawful to harass an applicant or a member because of that person's sex.

Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors or other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- (a) Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment, position or compensation.
- (b) Submission to, or rejection of, such conduct is used as the basis for any employment decisions affecting the member.
- (c) Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with a member's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

### 328.3.3 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discrimination and discriminatory harassment do not include actions that are in accordance with established rules, principles or standards, including:

- (a) Acts or omission of acts based solely upon bona fide occupational qualifications under the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the California Fair Employment and Housing Council guidelines.
- (b) Bona fide requests or demands by a supervisor that a member improve his/her work quality or output, that the member report to the job site on time, that the member comply with County or [department/office] rules or regulations, or any other appropriate work-related communication between supervisor and member.

### 328.3.4 RETALIATION

Retaliation is treating a person differently or engaging in acts of reprisal or intimidation against the person because he/she has engaged in protected activity, filed a charge of discrimination, participated in an investigation or opposed a discriminatory practice. Retaliation will not be tolerated.

## 328.4 RESPONSIBILITIES

This policy applies to all department personnel. All members shall follow the intent of these guidelines in a manner that reflects department policy, professional law enforcement standards and the best interest of the Department and its mission.

Members are encouraged to promptly report any discriminatory, retaliatory or harassing conduct or known violations of this policy to a supervisor. Any member who is not comfortable with reporting violations of this policy to his/her immediate supervisor may bypass the chain of command and make the report to a higher ranking supervisor or manager. Complaints may also be filed with the Sheriff, the Captain of Administrative Services or the Merced County Human Resources Department.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Discriminatory Harassment*

---

Any member who believes, in good faith, that he/she has been discriminated against, harassed or subjected to retaliation, or who has observed harassment or discrimination, is encouraged to promptly report such conduct in accordance with the procedures set forth in this policy.

Supervisors and managers receiving information regarding alleged violations of this policy shall determine if there is any basis for the allegation and shall proceed with resolution as stated below.

#### 328.4.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibilities of each supervisor and manager shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Continually monitoring the work environment and striving to ensure that it is free from all types of unlawful discrimination, including harassment or retaliation.
- (b) Taking prompt, appropriate action within their work units to avoid and minimize the incidence of any form of discrimination, harassment or retaliation.
- (c) Ensuring that his/her subordinates understand their responsibilities under this policy.
- (d) Ensuring that members who make complaints or who oppose any unlawful employment practices are protected from retaliation and that such matters are kept confidential to the extent possible.
- (e) Making a timely determination regarding the substance of any allegation based upon all available facts.
- (f) Notifying the Sheriff or Director of Administrative Services in writing of the circumstances surrounding any reported allegations or observed acts of discrimination, harassment or retaliation no later than the next business day.

#### 328.4.2 SUPERVISOR'S ROLE

Because of differences in individual values, supervisors and managers may find it difficult to recognize that their behavior or the behavior of others is discriminatory, harassing or retaliatory. Supervisors and managers shall be aware of the following considerations:

- (a) Behavior of supervisors and managers should represent the values of the [Department/Office] and professional law enforcement standards.
- (b) False or mistaken accusations of discrimination, harassment or retaliation can have negative effects on the careers of innocent members.

Nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent supervisors or managers from discharging supervisory or management responsibilities, such as determining duty assignments, evaluating or counseling members or issuing discipline, in a manner that is consistent with established procedures.

#### 328.4.3 QUESTIONS OR CLARIFICATION

Members with questions regarding what constitutes discrimination, sexual harassment or retaliation are encouraged to contact a supervisor, a manager, the Sheriff, the Director of Administrative Services, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing for further information, direction or clarification.

## *Discriminatory Harassment*

---

### **328.5 INVESTIGATION OF COMPLAINTS**

Various methods of resolution exist. During the pendency of any such investigation, the supervisor of the involved member should take prompt and reasonable steps to mitigate or eliminate any continuing abusive or hostile work environment. It is the policy of the [Department/Office] that all complaints of discrimination, retaliation or harassment shall be fully documented and promptly and thoroughly investigated.

#### **328.5.1 SUPERVISORY RESOLUTION**

Members who believe they are experiencing discrimination, harassment or retaliation should be encouraged to inform the individual that his/her behavior is unwelcome, offensive, unprofessional or inappropriate. However, if the member feels uncomfortable or threatened or has difficulty expressing his/her concern, or if this does not resolve the concern, assistance should be sought from a supervisor or manager who is a rank higher than the alleged transgressor.

#### **328.5.2 FORMAL INVESTIGATION**

If the complaint cannot be satisfactorily resolved through the process described above, a formal investigation will be conducted.

The person assigned to investigate the complaint will have full authority to investigate all aspects of the complaint. Investigative authority includes access to records and the cooperation of any members involved. No influence will be used to suppress any complaint and no member will be subject to retaliation or reprisal for filing a complaint, encouraging others to file a complaint or for offering testimony or evidence in any investigation.

Formal investigation of the complaint will be confidential to the extent possible and will include, but is not limited to, details of the specific incident, frequency and dates of occurrences and names of any witnesses. Witnesses will be advised regarding the prohibition against retaliation, and that a disciplinary process, up to and including termination, may result if retaliation occurs.

Members who believe they have been discriminated against, harassed or retaliated against because of their protected status, are encouraged to follow the chain of command but may also file a complaint directly with the Sheriff, Director of Administrative Services or the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

#### **328.5.3 ALTERNATIVE COMPLAINT PROCESS**

No provision of this policy shall be construed to prevent any member from seeking legal redress outside the [Department/Office]. Members who believe that they have been harassed, discriminated or retaliated against are entitled to bring complaints of employment discrimination to federal, state and/or local agencies responsible for investigating such allegations. Specific time limitations apply to the filing of such charges. Members are advised that proceeding with complaints under the provisions of this policy does not in any way affect those filing requirements.

### **328.6 DOCUMENTATION OF COMPLAINTS**

All complaints or allegations shall be thoroughly documented on forms and in a manner designated by the Sheriff. The outcome of all reports shall be:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Discriminatory Harassment*

---

- Approved by the Sheriff, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or the Captain of Administrative Services, depending on the ranks of the involved parties.
- Maintained in accordance with the [department/office]'s established records retention schedule.

#### 328.6.1 NOTIFICATION OF DISPOSITION

The complainant and/or victim will be notified in writing of the disposition of the investigation and the actions taken to remedy or address the circumstances giving rise to the complaint.

#### **328.7 TRAINING**

All new members shall be provided with a copy of this policy as part of their orientation. The policy shall be reviewed with each new member. The member shall certify by signing the prescribed form that he/she has been advised of this policy, is aware of and understands its contents and agrees to abide by its provisions during his/her term with the [Department/Office].

All members shall receive annual training on the requirements of this policy and shall certify by signing the prescribed form that they have reviewed the policy, understand its contents and agree that they will continue to abide by its provisions.

##### 328.7.1 SUPERVISOR TRAINING

All supervisors shall receive specific training and education regarding sexual harassment, prevention of abusive conduct and harassment based on gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation within six months of assuming a supervisory position. Refresher training shall be provided every two years thereafter (Government Code § 12950.1; 2 CCR 11024).

##### 328.7.2 TRAINING RECORDS

The Training Manager shall be responsible for maintaining records of all discriminatory harassment training provided to members. Records shall be retained in accordance with established records retention schedules and for a minimum of two years (2 CCR 11024).

#### **328.8 WORKING CONDITIONS**

The Administration Captain or the authorized designee should be responsible for reviewing facility design and working conditions for discriminatory practices. This person should collaborate with other County employees who are similarly tasked (2 CCR 11034).

# Child Abuse

## 330.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the investigation of suspected child abuse. This policy also addresses when Merced County Sheriff's Office members are required to notify the county Child Protective Services (CPS) of suspected child abuse.

### 330.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Child** - Unless otherwise specified by a cited statute, a child is any person under the age of 18 years.

**Child abuse** - Any offense or attempted offense involving violence or neglect with a child victim when committed by a person responsible for the child's care or any other act that would mandate notification to a social service agency or law enforcement (Penal Code § 11165.9; Penal Code § 11166).

## 330.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will investigate all reported incidents of alleged criminal child abuse and ensure CPS is notified as required by law.

## 330.3 MANDATORY NOTIFICATION

The child protection agency shall be notified when (Penal Code § 11166):

- (a) There is a known or suspected instance of child abuse or neglect reported, which is alleged to have occurred as a result of the action of a person responsible for the child's welfare, or
- (b) A person responsible for the child's welfare fails to adequately protect the child from abuse when the person knew or reasonably should have known that the child was in danger of abuse.

The District Attorney's office shall be notified in all instances of known or suspected child abuse or neglect reported to this department. Reports only involving neglect by a person, who has the care or custody of a child, to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care or supervision where no physical injury to the child has occurred should not be reported to the District Attorney (Penal Code § 11166).

When the abuse or neglect occurs at a licensed facility or is alleged to have resulted from the actions of a person who is required to have a state license (e.g., foster homes, group homes, day care), notification shall also be made to the California Department of Social Services or other applicable licensing authority (Penal Code 11166.1; Penal Code 11166.2).

For purposes of notification, the abuse or neglect includes physical injury or death inflicted by other than accidental means upon a child by another person; sexual abuse (Penal Code § 11165.1);

## *Child Abuse*

---

neglect (Penal Code § 11165.2); the willful harming or injuring of a child or the endangering of the person or health of a child (Penal Code § 11165.3); and unlawful corporal punishment or injury (Penal Code § 11165.4). Child abuse or neglect does not include a mutual affray between minors, nor does it include an injury caused by the reasonable and necessary force used by a peace officer acting within the course and scope of his/her employment as a peace officer.

### **330.3.1 NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE**

Notification should occur as follows (Penal Code § 11166):

- (a) Notification shall be made immediately, or as soon as practicable, by telephone, fax or electronic transmission.
- (b) A written follow-up report should be forwarded within 36 hours of receiving the information concerning the incident.

### **330.4 QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS**

Qualified investigators should be available for child abuse investigations. These investigators should:

- (a) Conduct interviews in child appropriate interview facilities.
- (b) Be familiar with forensic interview techniques specific to child abuse investigations.
- (c) Present all cases of alleged child abuse to the prosecutor for review.
- (d) Coordinate with other enforcement agencies, social service agencies and school administrators as needed.
- (e) Provide referrals to therapy services, victim advocates, guardians and support for the child and family as appropriate.
- (f) Participate in or coordinate with multidisciplinary investigative teams as applicable (Welfare and Institutions Code § 18961.7).

### **330.5 INVESTIGATIONS AND REPORTING**

In all reported or suspected cases of child abuse, a report will be written. Deputies shall write a report even if the allegations appear unfounded or unsubstantiated.

Investigations and reports related to suspected cases of child abuse should address, as applicable:

- (a) The overall basis for the contact. This should be done by the investigating deputy in all circumstances where a suspected child abuse victim was contacted.
- (b) The exigent circumstances that existed if deputies interviewed the child victim without the presence of a parent or guardian.
- (c) Any relevant statements the child may have made and to whom he/she made the statements.

## *Child Abuse*

---

- (d) If a child was taken into protective custody, the reasons, the name and title of the person making the decision, and why other alternatives were not appropriate.
- (e) Documentation of any visible injuries or any injuries identified by the child. This should include photographs of such injuries, if practicable.
- (f) Whether the child victim was transported for medical treatment or a medical examination.
- (g) Whether the victim identified a household member as the alleged perpetrator, and a list of the names of any other children who may reside in the residence.
- (h) Identification of any prior related reports or allegations of child abuse, including other jurisdictions, as reasonably known.
- (i) Previous addresses of the victim and suspect.
- (j) Other potential witnesses who have not yet been interviewed, such as relatives or others close to the victim's environment.

All cases of the unexplained death of a child should be investigated as thoroughly as if it had been a case of suspected child abuse (e.g., a sudden or unexplained death of an infant).

### **330.5.1 EXTRA JURISDICTIONAL REPORTS**

If a report of known or suspected child abuse or neglect that is alleged to have occurred outside this jurisdiction is received, department members shall ensure that the caller is immediately transferred to the agency with proper jurisdiction for the investigation of the case. If the caller cannot be successfully transferred to the appropriate agency, a report shall be taken and immediately referred by telephone, fax or electronic transfer to the agency with proper jurisdiction (Penal Code 11165.9).

### **330.6 PROTECTIVE CUSTODY**

Before taking any child into protective custody, the deputy should make reasonable attempts to contact CPS. Generally, removal of a child from his/her family, guardian or other responsible adult should be left to the child welfare authorities when they are present or have become involved in an investigation.

Generally, members of this department should remove a child from his/her parent or guardian without a court order only when no other effective alternative is reasonably available and immediate action reasonably appears necessary to protect the child. Prior to taking a child into protective custody, the deputy should take reasonable steps to deliver the child to another qualified parent or legal guardian, unless it reasonably appears that the release would endanger the child or result in abduction. If this is not a reasonable option, the deputy shall ensure that the child is delivered to CPS.

Whenever practicable, the deputy should inform a supervisor of the circumstances prior to taking a child into protective custody. If prior notification is not practicable, deputies should contact a supervisor promptly after taking a child into protective custody.

## *Child Abuse*

---

Children may only be removed from a parent or guardian in the following situations when a court order cannot reasonably be obtained in a timely manner (Welfare and Institutions Code § 305):

- (a) The deputy reasonably believes the child is a person described in Welfare and Institutions Code § 300, or a commercially exploited child under Penal Code § 647 and Penal Code § 653.22, and further has good cause to believe that any of the following conditions exist:
  - 1. The child has an immediate need for medical care.
  - 2. The child is in immediate danger of physical or sexual abuse.
  - 3. The physical environment or the fact that the child is left unattended poses an immediate threat to the child's health or safety. In the case of a child left unattended, the deputy shall first attempt to locate and determine if a responsible parent or guardian is available and capable of assuming custody before taking the child into protective custody.
- (b) The deputy reasonably believes the child requires protective custody under the provisions of Penal Code § 279.6, in one of the following circumstances:
  - 1. It reasonably appears to the deputy that a person is likely to conceal the child, flee the jurisdiction with the child or, by flight or concealment, evade the authority of the court.
  - 2. There is no lawful custodian available to take custody of the child.
  - 3. There are conflicting custody orders or conflicting claims to custody and the parties cannot agree which party should take custody of the child.
  - 4. The child is an abducted child.
- (c) The child is in the company of, or under the control of, a person arrested for Penal Code § 278 (Detainment or concealment of child from legal custodian) or Penal Code § 278.5 (Deprivation of custody of a child or right to visitation) (Penal Code § 279.6).

A child taken into protective custody shall be delivered to CPS unless otherwise directed by court order.

### **330.6.1 CALIFORNIA SAFELY SURRENDERED BABY LAW**

An individual having lawful custody of an infant less than 72 hours old is not guilty of abandonment if the individual voluntarily surrenders physical custody of the infant to personnel on-duty at a safe-surrender site, such as a hospital or fire department (Penal Code § 271.5). The law requires the surrender site to notify CPS.

### **330.6.2 NEWBORNS TESTING POSITIVE FOR DRUGS**

Under certain circumstances, deputies can be prohibited from taking a newborn who is the subject of a proposed adoption into protective custody, even when the newborn has tested positive for illegal drugs or the birth mother tested positive for illegal drugs.

## *Child Abuse*

---

Deputies shall instead follow the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code § 305.6 to ensure that the newborn is placed with the adoptive parents when it is appropriate.

### **330.7 INTERVIEWS**

#### **330.7.1 PRELIMINARY INTERVIEWS**

Absent extenuating circumstances or impracticality, deputies should record the preliminary interview with suspected child abuse victims. Deputies should avoid multiple interviews with a child victim and should attempt to gather only the information necessary to begin an investigation. When practicable, investigating deputies should defer interviews until a person who is specially trained in such interviews is available. Generally, child victims should not be interviewed in the home or location where the alleged abuse occurred.

#### **330.7.2 DETAINING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE VICTIMS FOR AN INTERVIEW**

A deputy should not detain a child involuntarily who is suspected of being a victim of child abuse solely for the purpose of an interview or physical exam without the consent of a parent or guardian unless one of the following applies:

- (a) Exigent circumstances exist, such as:
  - 1. A reasonable belief that medical issues of the child need to be addressed immediately.
  - 2. A reasonable belief that the child is or will be in danger of harm if the interview or physical exam is not immediately completed.
  - 3. The alleged offender is the custodial parent or guardian and there is reason to believe the child may be in continued danger.
- (b) A court order or warrant has been issued.

#### **330.7.3 INTERVIEWS AT A SCHOOL**

Any student at school who is a suspected victim of child abuse shall be afforded the option of being interviewed in private or selecting any qualified available adult member of the school staff to be present. The purpose of the staff member's presence is to provide comfort and support. The staff member shall not participate in the interview. The selection of a staff member should be such that it does not burden the school with costs or hardship (Penal Code § 11174.3).

### **330.8 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

If the child has been the victim of abuse that requires a medical examination, the investigating deputy should obtain consent for such examination from the appropriate parent, guardian or agency having legal custody of the child. The deputy should also arrange for the child's transportation to the appropriate medical facility.

In cases where the alleged offender is the custodial parent or guardian and is refusing consent for the medical examination, deputies should notify a supervisor before proceeding. If exigent circumstances do not exist or if state law does not provide for deputies to take the child for a

## *Child Abuse*

---

medical examination, the notified supervisor should consider obtaining a court order for such an examination.

### **330.9 DRUG-ENDANGERED CHILDREN**

A coordinated response by law enforcement and social services agencies is appropriate to meet the immediate and longer-term medical and safety needs of children exposed to the manufacturing, trafficking or use of narcotics.

#### **330.9.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Detective Unit supervisor should:

- (a) Work with professionals from the appropriate agencies, including CPS, other law enforcement agencies, medical service providers and local prosecutors to develop community specific procedures for responding to situations where there are children endangered by exposure to methamphetamine labs or the manufacture and trafficking of other drugs.
- (b) Activate any available interagency response when a deputy notifies the Detective Unit supervisor that the deputy has responded to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where a child is present or where evidence indicates that a child lives there.
- (c) Develop a report format or checklist for use when deputies respond to drug labs or other narcotics crime scenes. The checklist will help deputies document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions that may affect the child.

#### **330.9.2 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Deputies responding to a drug lab or other narcotics crime scene where a child is present or where there is evidence that a child lives should:

- (a) Document the environmental, medical, social and other conditions of the child using photography as appropriate and the checklist or form developed for this purpose.
- (b) Notify the Detective Unit supervisor so an interagency response can begin.

### **330.10 STATE MANDATES AND OTHER RELEVANT LAWS**

California requires or permits the following:

#### **330.10.1 RELEASE OF REPORTS**

Information related to incidents of child abuse or suspected child abuse shall be confidential and may only be disclosed pursuant to state law and the Records Maintenance and Release Policy (Penal Code 841.5; Penal Code § 11167.5).

#### **330.10.2 REQUESTS FOR REMOVAL FROM THE CHILD ABUSE CENTRAL INDEX (CACI)**

Any person whose name has been forwarded to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) for placement in California's CACI, as a result of an investigation, may request that his/her name be removed from the CACI list. Requests shall not qualify for consideration if there is an active

## *Child Abuse*

---

case, ongoing investigation or pending prosecution that precipitated the entry to CACI (Penal Code § 11169). All requests for removal shall be submitted in writing by the requesting person and promptly routed to the CACI hearing officer.

### 330.10.3 CACI HEARING OFFICER

The Detective Unit supervisor will normally serve as the hearing officer but must not be actively connected with the case that resulted in the person's name being submitted to CACI. Upon receiving a qualified request for removal, the hearing officer shall promptly schedule a hearing to take place during normal business hours and provide written notification of the time and place of the hearing to the requesting party.

### 330.10.4 CACI HEARING PROCEDURES

The hearing is an informal process where the person requesting removal from the CACI list will be permitted to present relevant evidence (e.g., certified copy of an acquittal, factual finding of innocence) as to why his/her name should be removed. The person requesting the hearing may record the hearing at his/her own expense.

Formal rules of evidence will not apply and the hearing officer may consider, in addition to evidence submitted by the person requesting the hearing, any relevant information including, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Case reports including any supplemental reports
- (b) Statements by investigators
- (c) Statements from representatives of the District Attorney's Office
- (d) Statements by representatives of a child protective agency who may be familiar with the case

After considering all information presented, the hearing officer shall make a determination as to whether the requesting party's name should be removed from the CACI list. Such determination shall be based on a finding that the allegations in the investigation are not substantiated (Penal Code § 11169).

If, after considering the evidence, the hearing officer finds that the allegations are not substantiated, he/she shall cause a request to be completed and forwarded to the DOJ that the person's name be removed from the CACI list. A copy of the hearing results and the request for removal will be attached to the case reports.

The findings of the hearing officer shall be considered final and binding.

### 330.10.5 CHILD DEATH REVIEW TEAM

This department should cooperate with any interagency child death review team investigation. Written and oral information relating to the death of a child that would otherwise be subject to release restrictions may be disclosed to the child death review team upon written request and approval of a supervisor (Penal Code § 11174.32).

## *Child Abuse*

---

### **330.11 TRAINING**

The Department should provide training on best practices in child abuse investigations to members tasked with investigating these cases. The training should include:

- (a) Participating in multidisciplinary investigations, as appropriate.
- (b) Conducting forensic interviews.
- (c) Availability of therapy services for children and families.
- (d) Availability of specialized forensic medical exams.
- (e) Cultural competence (including interpretive services) related to child abuse investigations.
- (f) Availability of victim advocate or guardian ad litem support.

## Missing Persons

### 332.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for handling missing person investigations.

#### 332.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**At risk** - Includes, but is not limited to (Penal Code § 14215):

- A victim of a crime or foul play.
- A person missing and in need of medical attention.
- A missing person with no pattern of running away or disappearing.
- A missing person who may be the victim of parental abduction.
- A mentally impaired missing person, including cognitively impaired or developmentally disabled.

**Missing person** - Any person who is reported missing to law enforcement when the person's location is unknown. This includes a child who has been taken, detained, concealed, enticed away or kept by a parent in violation of the law (Penal Code § 277 et seq.). It also includes any child who is missing voluntarily, involuntarily or under circumstances that do not conform to his/her ordinary habits or behavior, and who may be in need of assistance (Penal Code § 14215).

**Missing person networks** - Databases or computer networks available to law enforcement and that are suitable for information related to missing persons investigations. These include the National Crime Information Center (NCIC), the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS), Missing Person System (MPS) and the Unidentified Persons System (UPS).

### 332.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office does not consider any report of a missing person to be routine and assumes that the missing person is in need of immediate assistance until an investigation reveals otherwise. The Merced County Sheriff's Office gives missing person cases priority over property-related cases and will not require any time frame to pass before beginning a missing person investigation (Penal Code § 14211).

### 332.3 REQUIRED FORMS AND BIOLOGICAL SAMPLE COLLECTION KITS

The Investigation supervisor should ensure the forms and kits are developed and available in accordance with this policy, state law, federal law and the California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) Missing Persons Investigations guidelines, including:

- Department report form for use in missing person cases
- Missing person investigation checklist that provides investigation guidelines and resources that could be helpful in the early hours of a missing person investigation (Penal Code § 13519.07)

## *Missing Persons*

---

- Missing person school notification form
- Medical records release form from the California Department of Justice
- California DOJ missing person forms as appropriate
- Biological sample collection kits

### **332.4 ACCEPTANCE OF REPORTS**

Any member encountering a person who wishes to report a missing person or runaway shall render assistance without delay (Penal Code § 14211). This can be accomplished by accepting the report via telephone or in-person and initiating the investigation. Those members who do not take such reports or who are unable to render immediate assistance shall promptly dispatch or alert a member who can take the report.

A report shall be accepted in all cases and regardless of where the person was last seen, where the person resides or any other question of jurisdiction (Penal Code § 14211).

### **332.5 INITIAL INVESTIGATION**

Deputies or other members conducting the initial investigation of a missing person should take the following investigative actions, as applicable:

- (a) Respond to a dispatched call for service as soon as practicable.
- (b) Interview the reporting party and any witnesses to determine whether the person qualifies as a missing person and, if so, whether the person may be at risk.
- (c) Notify a supervisor immediately if there is evidence that a missing person is either at risk or may qualify for a public alert, or both (see the Public Alerts Policy).
- (d) Broadcast a "Be on the Look-Out" (BOLO) bulletin if the person is under 21 years of age or there is evidence that the missing person is at risk. The BOLO should be broadcast as soon as practicable but in no event more than one hour after determining the missing person is under 21 years of age or may be at risk (Penal Code § 14211).
- (e) Ensure that entries are made into the appropriate missing person networks as follows:
  1. Immediately, when the missing person is at risk.
  2. In all other cases, as soon as practicable, but not later than two hours from the time of the initial report.
- (f) Complete the appropriate report forms accurately and completely and initiate a search as applicable under the facts.
- (g) Collect and/or review:
  1. A photograph and a fingerprint card of the missing person, if available.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Missing Persons

---

2. A voluntarily provided biological sample of the missing person, if available (e.g., toothbrush, hairbrush).
  3. Any documents that may assist in the investigation, such as court orders regarding custody.
  4. Any other evidence that may assist in the investigation, including personal electronic devices (e.g., cell phones, computers).
- (h) When circumstances permit and if appropriate, attempt to determine the missing person's location through his/her telecommunications carrier.
- (i) Contact the appropriate agency if the report relates to a previously made missing person report and another agency is actively investigating that report. When this is not practical, the information should be documented in an appropriate report for transmission to the appropriate agency. If the information relates to an at-risk missing person, the member should notify a supervisor and proceed with reasonable steps to locate the missing person.

### **332.6 REPORT PROCEDURES AND ROUTING**

Employees should complete all missing person reports and forms promptly and advise the appropriate supervisor as soon as a missing person report is ready for review.

#### **332.6.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities of the supervisor shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Reviewing and approving missing person reports upon receipt.
  1. The reports should be promptly sent to the Records Division.
- (b) Ensuring resources are deployed as appropriate.
- (c) Initiating a command post as needed.
- (d) Ensuring applicable notifications and public alerts are made and documented.
- (e) Ensuring that records have been entered into the appropriate missing persons networks.
- (f) Taking reasonable steps to identify and address any jurisdictional issues to ensure cooperation among agencies.

If the case falls within the jurisdiction of another agency, the supervisor should facilitate transfer of the case to the agency of jurisdiction.

#### **332.6.2 RECORDS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITIES**

The receiving member shall:

- (a) As soon as reasonable under the circumstances, notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the missing person's

## *Missing Persons*

---

residence in cases where the missing person is a resident of another jurisdiction (Penal Code § 14211).

- (b) Notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency in whose jurisdiction the missing person was last seen (Penal Code § 14211).
- (c) Notify and forward a copy of the report to the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction over the missing person's intended or possible destination, if known.
- (d) Ensure the Detective Division is aware of the report via department electronic reporting/notification procedures.
- (e) Coordinate with the NCIC Terminal Contractor for California to have the missing person record in the NCIC computer networks updated with additional information obtained from missing person investigations (42 USC § 5780).

### **332.7 DETECTIVE UNIT FOLLOW-UP**

In addition to completing or continuing any actions listed above, the investigator assigned to a missing person investigation:

- (a) Shall ensure that the missing person's school is notified within 10 days if the missing person is a juvenile.
  - 1. The notice shall be in writing and should also include a photograph (Education Code § 49068.6).
  - 2. The investigator should meet with school officials regarding the notice as appropriate to stress the importance of including the notice in the child's student file, along with contact information if the school receives a call requesting the transfer of the missing child's files to another school.
- (b) Should recontact the reporting person and/or other witnesses within 30 days of the initial report and within 30 days thereafter to determine if any additional information has become available via the reporting party.
- (c) Should consider contacting other agencies involved in the case to determine if any additional information is available.
- (d) Shall verify and update CLETS, NCIC and any other applicable missing person networks within 30 days of the original entry into the networks and every 30 days thereafter until the missing person is located (42 USC § 5780).
- (e) Should continue to make reasonable efforts to locate the missing person and document these efforts at least every 30 days.
- (f) Shall maintain a close liaison with state and local child welfare systems and the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children® (NCMEC) if the missing person is under the age of 21 and shall promptly notify NCMEC when the person is missing from a foster care family home or childcare institution (42 USC § 5780).

## *Missing Persons*

---

- (g) Should make appropriate inquiry with the Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner.
- (h) Should obtain and forward medical and dental records, photos, X-rays and biological samples pursuant to Penal Code § 14212 and Penal Code § 14250.
- (i) Shall attempt to obtain the most recent photograph for persons under 18 years of age if it has not previously been obtained and forward the photograph to California DOJ (Penal Code § 14210) and enter the photograph into applicable missing person networks (42 USC § 5780).
- (j) Should consider making appropriate entries and searches in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NamUs).
- (k) In the case of an at-risk missing person or a person who has been missing for an extended time, should consult with a supervisor regarding seeking federal assistance from the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service (28 USC § 586).

### **332.8 WHEN A MISSING PERSON IS FOUND**

When any person reported missing is found, the assigned investigator shall document the location of the missing person in the appropriate report, notify the relatives and/or reporting party, as appropriate, and other involved agencies and refer the case for additional investigation if warranted.

The Records Supervisor shall ensure that, upon receipt of information that a missing person has been located, the following occurs (Penal Code § 14213):

- (a) Notification is made to California DOJ.
- (b) The missing person's school is notified.
- (c) Entries are made in the applicable missing person networks.
- (d) Immediately notify the Attorney General's Office.
- (e) Notification shall be made to any other law enforcement agency that took the initial report or participated in the investigation within 24 hours.

#### **332.8.1 UNIDENTIFIED PERSONS**

Department members investigating a case of an unidentified person who is deceased or a living person who cannot assist in identifying him/herself should:

- (a) Obtain a complete description of the person.
- (b) Enter the unidentified person's description into the NCIC Unidentified Person File.
- (c) Use available resources, such as those related to missing persons, to identify the person.

## *Missing Persons*

---

### **332.9 CASE CLOSURE**

The Detective Unit supervisor may authorize the closure of a missing person case after considering the following:

- (a) Closure is appropriate when the missing person is confirmed returned or evidence has matched an unidentified person or body.
- (b) If the missing person is a resident of Merced County Sheriff's Department or this department is the lead agency, the case should be kept under active investigation for as long as the person may still be alive. Exhaustion of leads in the investigation should not be a reason for closing a case.
- (c) If this department is not the lead agency, the case can be made inactive if all investigative leads have been exhausted, the lead agency has been notified and entries are made in the applicable missing person networks as appropriate.
- (d) A missing person case should not be closed or reclassified because the person would have reached a certain age or adulthood or because the person is now the subject of a criminal or civil warrant.

### **332.10 TRAINING**

Subject to available resources, the Training Manager should ensure that members of this department whose duties include missing person investigations and reports receive regular training that includes:

- (a) The initial investigation:
  - 1. Assessments and interviews
  - 2. Use of current resources, such as Mobile Audio Video (MAV)
  - 3. Confirming missing status and custody status of minors
  - 4. Evaluating the need for a heightened response
  - 5. Identifying the zone of safety based on chronological age and developmental stage
- (b) Briefing of department members at the scene.
- (c) Identifying NCIC Missing Person File categories (e.g., disability, endangered, involuntary, juvenile and catastrophe).
- (d) Verifying the accuracy of all descriptive information.
- (e) Initiating a neighborhood investigation.
- (f) Investigating any relevant recent family dynamics.
- (g) Addressing conflicting information.
- (h) Key investigative and coordination steps.

## *Missing Persons*

---

- (i) Managing a missing person case.
- (j) Additional resources and specialized services.
- (k) Update procedures for case information and descriptions.
- (l) Preserving scenes.
- (m) Internet and technology issues (e.g., Internet use, cell phone use).
- (n) Media relations.

## Public Alerts

### 334.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for alerting the public to important information and soliciting public aid when appropriate.

### 334.2 POLICY

Public alerts may be employed using the Emergency Alert System (EAS), local radio, television and press organizations and other groups to notify the public of incidents, or enlist the aid of the public, when the exchange of information may enhance the safety of the community. Various types of alerts may be available based upon each situation and the alert system's individual criteria.

### 334.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

#### 334.3.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees of the Merced County Sheriff's Office should notify a supervisor as soon as practicable upon learning of a situation where public notification, a warning or enlisting the help of the media and public could assist in locating a missing person, apprehending a dangerous person or gathering information.

#### 334.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor apprised of the need for a public alert is responsible to make the appropriate notifications based upon the circumstances of each situation. The supervisor shall promptly notify the Sheriff, Undersheriff, the Operations Division Captain and the Public Information Officer when any public alert is generated.

The supervisor in charge of the investigation to which the alert relates is responsible for the following:

- (a) Updating alerts
- (b) Canceling alerts
- (c) Ensuring all appropriate reports are completed
- (d) Preparing an after-action evaluation of the investigation to be forwarded to the Operations Division Captain.

### 334.4 AMBER ALERTS

The AMBER Alert™ Program is a voluntary partnership between law enforcement agencies, broadcasters, transportation agencies and the wireless industry, to activate urgent bulletins in child abduction cases.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Public Alerts

---

### 334.4.1 CRITERIA FOR AMBER ALERT

The following conditions must be met before activating an AMBER Alert (Government Code § 8594(a)):

- (a) A child has been abducted or taken by anyone, including but not limited to a custodial parent or guardian.
- (b) The victim is 17 years of age or younger, or has a proven mental or physical disability.
- (c) The victim is in imminent danger of serious injury or death.
- (d) There is information available that, if provided to the public, could assist in the child's safe recovery.

### 334.4.2 PROCEDURE FOR AMBER ALERT

The supervisor in charge will ensure the following:

- (a) An initial press release is prepared that includes all available information that might aid in locating the child:
  - 1. The child's identity, age and description
  - 2. Photograph if available
  - 3. The suspect's identity, age and description, if known
  - 4. Pertinent vehicle description
  - 5. Detail regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, if known
  - 6. Name and telephone number of the Public Information Officer or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
  - 7. A telephone number for the public to call with leads or information
- (b) The local California Highway Patrol communications center should be contacted to initiate a multi-regional or statewide EAS broadcast, following any policies and procedures developed by CHP (Government Code § 8594).
- (c) The press release information is forwarded to the Sheriff's Office dispatch center so that general broadcasts can be made to local law enforcement agencies.
- (d) Information regarding the missing person should be entered into the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS).
- (e) Information regarding the missing person should be entered into the California Department of Justice Missing and Unidentified Persons System (MUPS)/National Crime Information Center (NCIC).
- (f) The following resources should be considered as circumstances dictate:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Public Alerts

---

1. The local FBI office
2. National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC)

### **334.5 BLUE ALERTS**

Blue Alerts may be issued when a deputy is killed, injured or assaulted and the suspect may pose a threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.

#### **334.5.1 CRITERIA FOR BLUE ALERTS**

All of the following conditions must be met before activating a Blue Alert (Government Code § 8594.5):

- (a) A law enforcement officer has been killed, suffered serious bodily injury or has been assaulted with a deadly weapon, and the suspect has fled the scene of the offense.
- (b) The investigating law enforcement agency has determined that the suspect poses an imminent threat to the public or other law enforcement personnel.
- (c) A detailed description of the suspect's vehicle or license plate is available for broadcast.
- (d) Public dissemination of available information may help avert further harm or accelerate apprehension of the suspect.

#### **334.5.2 PROCEDURE FOR BLUE ALERT**

The supervisor in charge should ensure the following:

- (a) An initial press release is prepared that includes all available information that might aid in locating the suspect:
  1. The license number and/or any other available description or photograph of the vehicle
  2. Photograph, description and/or identification of the suspect
  3. The suspect's identity, age and description, if known
  4. Detail regarding location of incident, direction of travel, potential destinations, if known
  5. Name and telephone number of the Public Information Officer or other authorized individual to handle media liaison
  6. A telephone number for the public to call with leads or information
- (b) The local California Highway Patrol communications center is contacted to initiate a multi-regional or statewide EAS broadcast.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Public Alerts

---

- (c) The information in the press release is forwarded to the Sheriff's Office dispatch center so that general broadcasts can be made to local law enforcement agencies.
- (d) The following resources should be considered as circumstances dictate:
  - 1. Entry into the California Law Enforcement Telecommunication System (CLETS)
  - 2. The FBI local office

### **334.6 SILVER ALERTS**

Silver Alerts® is an emergency notification system for people who are 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired and have been reported missing (Government Code § 8594.10).

#### **334.6.1 CRITERIA FOR SILVER ALERTS**

All of the following conditions must be met before activating a Silver Alert (Government Code § 8594.10):

- (a) The missing person is 65 years of age or older, developmentally disabled or cognitively impaired.
- (b) The department has utilized all available local resources.
- (c) The investigating deputy or supervisor has determined that the person is missing under unexplained or suspicious circumstances.
- (d) The investigating deputy or supervisor believes that the person is in danger because of age, health, mental or physical disability, environment or weather conditions, that the person is in the company of a potentially dangerous person, or that there are other factors indicating that the person may be in peril.
- (e) There is information available that, if disseminated to the public, could assist in the safe recovery of the missing person.

#### **334.6.2 PROCEDURE FOR SILVER ALERT**

Requests for a Silver Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Government Code § 8594.10).

### **334.7 MUTUAL AID**

The experiences of other law enforcement jurisdictions that have implemented similar plans indicate an AMBER Alert or Blue Alert will generate a high volume of telephone calls to the handling agency.

The Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit facilities and staff can be made available in the event of a high call volume.

If the appropriate authority of the requesting agency elects to use the services of the Sheriff's Department, the following will apply:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Public Alerts

---

- (a) Notify the Sheriff's Department Operations Captain of the incident and the request for assistance. He/she will provide a telephone number for the public to call.
- (b) In the press release, direct the public to the telephone number provided by the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit.
- (c) The Public Information Officer will continue to handle all press releases and media inquiries. Any press inquiries received by the Sheriff's Department will be referred back to this department.

The Merced County Sheriff's Office may assign a minimum of two detectives/deputies to respond to the Sheriff's Department Dispatch Unit to screen and relay information and any clues received from incoming calls. As circumstances dictate, more staff resources from the handling law enforcement agency may be necessary to assist the staff at the Dispatch Unit.

### **334.8 YELLOW ALERTS**

Yellow Alerts are notifications related to hit-and-run incidents resulting in the death or injury (Vehicle Code § 20001; Government Code § 8594.15).

#### **334.8.1 CRITERIA FOR YELLOW ALERTS**

All of the following conditions must be met before requesting the activation of a Yellow Alert (Government Code § 8594.15):

- (a) A person has been killed or has suffered serious bodily injury due to a hit-and-run.
- (b) It is likely the suspect may be seen on a state highway.
- (c) There is additional information concerning the suspect's vehicle, including, but not limited to any of the following:
  - 1. The suspect or the suspect's vehicle can be particularly described (e.g., a complete or partial license plate number)
  - 2. Unique vehicle characteristics (e.g., make, model and color of suspect's vehicle)
  - 3. The identity of the suspect
- (d) Public assistance can mitigate danger to the public or quicken the apprehension of the suspect.

#### **334.8.2 PROCEDURE FOR YELLOW ALERT**

Requests for a Yellow Alert shall be made through the California Highway Patrol (Government Code § 8594.15).

## Victim and Witness Assistance

### 336.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that crime victims and witnesses receive appropriate assistance, that they are provided with information from government and private resources, and that the agency meets all related legal mandates.

### 336.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing guidance and assistance to the victims and witnesses of crime. The employees of the Merced County Sheriff's Office will show compassion and understanding for victims and witnesses and will make reasonable efforts to provide the support and information identified in this policy.

### 336.3 CRIME VICTIM LIAISON

The Sheriff may appoint a member of the Department to serve as the crime victim liaison. The crime victim liaison will be the point of contact for individuals requiring further assistance or information from the Merced County Sheriff's Office regarding benefits from crime victim resources. This person shall also be responsible for maintaining compliance with all legal mandates related to crime victims and/or witnesses.

#### 336.3.1 SPECIFIC VICTIM LIAISON DUTIES

The Sheriff shall designate a crime victim liaison officer as liaison to the Victim-Witness Assistance Program office. It shall be his/her responsibility to forward copies of police reports requested by the local victim centers to verify the criminal activity upon which the application for assistance is based. The liaison officer shall carry out the functions required by state law; and devise and implement written procedures to notify and provide the required compensation information. The Records Maintenance and Release Policy in this manual regarding the release of reports shall be followed in all cases (Government Code § 13962(b); 2 CCR 649.35; 2 CCR 649.36).

### 336.4 CRIME VICTIMS

Deputies should provide all victims with the applicable victim information handouts.

Deputies should never guarantee a victim's safety from future harm but may make practical safety suggestions to victims who express fear of future harm or retaliation. Deputies should never guarantee that a person qualifies as a victim for the purpose of compensation or restitution but may direct him/her to the proper written department material or available victim resources.

#### 336.4.1 VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Deputies investigating or receiving a report involving a victim of human trafficking shall inform the victim, or the victim's parent or guardian if the victim is a minor, that upon the request of the victim the names and images of the victim and his/her immediate family members may be withheld from becoming a matter of public record until the conclusion of the investigation or prosecution (Penal Code § 293).

## *Victim and Witness Assistance*

---

### **336.5 VICTIM INFORMATION**

The Administration Supervisor shall ensure that victim information handouts are available and current. These should include as appropriate:

- (a) Shelters and other community resources for victims of domestic violence.
- (b) Community resources for victims of sexual assault.
- (c) Assurance that sexual assault victims will not incur out-of-pocket expenses for forensic medical exams, and information about evidence collection, storage and preservation in sexual assault cases (42 USC § 3796gg-4; 42 USC § 10603f; Penal Code § 13823.95(a)).
- (d) An explanation that victims of sexual assault who seek a medical evidentiary examination shall not be required to participate or agree to participate in the criminal justice system, either prior to the examination or at any other time (Penal Code § 13823.95(b)).
- (e) An advisement that a person who was arrested may be released on bond or some other form of release and that the victim should not rely upon an arrest as a guarantee of safety.
- (f) A clear explanation of relevant court orders and how they can be obtained.
- (g) Information regarding available compensation for qualifying victims of crime (Government Code § 13962).
- (h) VINE® information (Victim Information and Notification Everyday), including the telephone number and whether this free service is available to allow victims to check on an offender's custody status and to register for automatic notification when a person is released from jail.
- (i) Notice regarding U Visa and T Visa application processes.
- (j) Resources available for victims of identity theft.
- (k) A place for the deputy's name, badge number and any applicable case or incident number.
- (l) The "Victims of Domestic Violence" card containing the names, phone numbers or local county hotlines of local shelters for battered women and rape victim counseling centers within the county and their 24-hour counseling service telephone numbers (Penal Code § 264.2).
- (m) The rights of sexual assault victims card with the required information as provided in Penal Code § 680.2.
- (n) Any additional information required by state law (Penal Code § 13701; Penal Code § 679.02; Penal Code § 679.04; Penal Code § 679.05; Penal Code § 679.026).

### **336.6 WITNESSES**

Deputies should never guarantee a witness' safety from future harm or that his/her identity will always remain confidential. Deputies may make practical safety suggestions to witnesses who express fear of future harm or retaliation.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Victim and Witness Assistance*

---

Deputies should investigate allegations of witness intimidation and take enforcement action when lawful and reasonable.

# Hate Crimes

## 338.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to meet or exceed the provisions of Penal Code § 13519.6(c) and provides members of this [department/office] with guidelines for identifying and investigating incidents and crimes that may be motivated by hatred or other bias.

### 338.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**Hate crimes** - A criminal act committed in whole or in part, because of one or more of the following actual or perceived characteristics of the victim (Penal Code § 422.55; Penal Code § 422.56; Penal Code § 422.57):

- (a) Disability
- (b) Gender
- (c) Nationality
- (d) Race or ethnicity
- (e) Religion
- (f) Sexual orientation
- (g) Association with a person or group with one or more of these actual or perceived characteristics
- (h) Examples of hate crimes include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Interfering with, oppressing or threatening any other person in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured by the constitution or laws because of one or more of the actual or perceived characteristics of the victim (Penal Code § 422.6).
  - 2. Defacing a person's property because of one or more of the actual or perceived characteristics of the victim (Penal Code § 422.6(b)).
  - 3. Terrorizing a person with a swastika or burning cross (Penal Code § 11411).
  - 4. Vandalizing a place of worship (Penal Code § 594.3).

The federal Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act expands federal hate crimes to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability (18 USC § 249).

**Victim** - Includes, but is not limited to, a community center, educational facility, entity, family, group, individual, office, meeting hall, person, place of worship, private institution, public agency, library or other victim or intended victim of the offense (Penal Code § 422.56).

## *Hate Crimes*

---

### **338.2 POLICY**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes and places a high priority on the rights of all individuals guaranteed under the state and federal constitution and incorporated in state and federal law.

### **338.3 PREVENTION AND PREPARATION**

While it is recognized that not all crime can be prevented, this [department/office] is committed to taking a proactive approach to preventing and preparing for likely hate crimes by, among other things:

- (a) Make an affirmative effort to establish contact with persons and groups within the community who are likely targets of hate crimes and forming networks that address prevention and response.
- (b) Accessing assistance by, among other things, activating the California Department of Justice Hate Crime Rapid Response Protocol when necessary.
- (c) Providing victim assistance and community follow-up as outlined below.
- (d) Educating community and civic groups about hate crime laws.
- (e) Establishing a community relations liaison to work with community organizations and leaders to coordinate public meetings, local group meetings and school assemblies on recognizing, preparing for and preventing hate crimes.

### **338.4 INVESTIGATIONS**

Whenever any member of this [department/office] receives a report of a suspected hate crime or other activity that reasonably appears to involve a potential hate crime, the following should occur:

- (a) Assigned deputies should promptly contact the victim, witness or reporting party to investigate the matter further as circumstances may dictate
- (b) A supervisor should be notified of the circumstances as soon as practical.
- (c) Once in-progress aspects of any such situation have been stabilized (e.g., treatment of victims, apprehension of suspects at the scene), the assigned deputies should take all reasonable steps to preserve evidence that establishes a possible hate crime.
- (d) Based upon available information, deputies should take appropriate action to mitigate further injury or damage to potential victims or the community.
  - 1. Deputies should contact the property owner to remove any evidence that cannot be physically removed (i.e., painted words or signs on a wall) by the deputy once the offense is documented.
- (e) The assigned deputies should interview available witnesses, victims and others to determine what circumstances, if any, indicate that the situation may involve a hate crime.
  - 1. No victim of or a witness to a hate crime who is not otherwise charged with or convicted of a crime under state law may be detained for or turned over to

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Hate Crimes*

---

federal authorities exclusively for any actual or suspected immigration violation (Penal Code § 422.93(b))

2. Statements of victims and witnesses should be audio or video recorded if practicable (see the Portable Audio/Video Recorders Policy).
- (f) Depending on the situation, the assigned deputies or supervisor may request additional assistance from detectives or other resources.
- (g) The assigned deputies should include all available evidence indicating the likelihood of a hate crime in the relevant reports. All related reports should be clearly marked as "Hate Crimes" and, absent prior approval of a supervisor, should be completed and submitted by the assigned deputies before the end of the shift.
- (h) The assigned deputies will provide the victims of any suspected hate crime with a brochure on hate crimes (Penal Code § 422.92). Such brochures will also be available to members of the general public upon request. The assigned deputies should also make reasonable efforts to assist the victims by providing available information on local assistance programs and organizations.
- (i) The assigned deputies and supervisor should take reasonable steps to ensure that any such situation does not escalate further and should provide information to the victim regarding legal aid (e.g., Possible Temporary Restraining Order through the District Attorney or County Counsel Penal Code § 136.2 or Civil Code § 52.1 as indicated).

#### 338.4.1 DETECTIVE UNIT RESPONSIBILITY

If a hate crime case is assigned to the Detective Unit, the assigned detective will be responsible for:

- (a) Coordinating further investigation with the District Attorney and other appropriate law enforcement agencies.
- (b) Maintaining contact with the victims and other involved individuals, as needed.
- (c) Maintaining statistical data and tracking on suspected hate crimes as indicated for required reporting to the Attorney General (Penal Code § 13023). See the Records Division Policy.
- (d) Make reasonable efforts to identify additional witnesses.
- (e) Utilize available criminal intelligence systems as appropriate (see Criminal Organizations Policy).
- (f) Provide the supervisor and the Public Information Officer ([PIO]) with information that can be responsibly reported to the media.
  1. When appropriate, the [PIO] should reiterate that the hate crime will not be tolerated and will be taken seriously.

#### 338.4.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

The supervisor should confer with the initial responding deputies to identify reasonable and appropriate preliminary actions. The supervisor should:

- (a) Review related reports to verify whether the incident is appropriately classified as a hate crime for federal and state bias crime-reporting purposes.

## *Hate Crimes*

---

- (b) Notify other appropriate personnel in the chain of command, depending on the nature and seriousness of the offense and its potential inflammatory and related impact on the community.
- (c) Consider the need for further action to be taken for the protection of the victims or vulnerable sites, such as assigning a deputy at specific locations that could become targets or increase neighborhood surveillance.
- (d) Ensure that members who are responsible for the conduct and maintenance of information on criminal groups are notified and that they make appropriate inquiries and entries into criminal intelligence systems (see Criminal Organizations Policy).

### **338.5 TRAINING**

All members of this [department/office] will receive POST-approved training on hate crime recognition and investigation as provided by Penal Code § 13519.6. Training should also include recognition of bias motivators such as ranges of attitudes and perceptions toward a specific characteristic or group.

# Standards of Conduct

## **340.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

This policy establishes standards of conduct that are consistent with the values and mission of the Merced County Sheriff's Office and are expected of all department members. The standards contained in this policy are not intended to be an exhaustive list of requirements and prohibitions but they do identify many of the important matters concerning conduct. In addition to the provisions of this policy, members are subject to all other provisions contained in this manual, as well as any additional guidance on conduct that may be disseminated by this department or a member's supervisors.

## **340.2 POLICY**

The continued employment or appointment of every member of the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall be based on conduct that reasonably conforms to the guidelines set forth herein. Failure to meet the guidelines set forth in this policy, whether on- or off-duty, may be cause for disciplinary action.

## **340.3 DIRECTIVES AND ORDERS**

Members shall comply with lawful directives and orders from any department supervisor or person in a position of authority, absent a reasonable and bona fide justification.

### **340.3.1 UNLAWFUL OR CONFLICTING ORDERS**

Supervisors shall not knowingly issue orders or directives that, if carried out, would result in a violation of any law or department policy. Supervisors should not issue orders that conflict with any previous order without making reasonable clarification that the new order is intended to countermand the earlier order.

No member is required to obey any order that appears to be in direct conflict with any federal law, state law or local ordinance. Following a known unlawful order is not a defense and does not relieve the member from criminal or civil prosecution or administrative discipline. If the legality of an order is in doubt, the affected member shall ask the issuing supervisor to clarify the order or shall confer with a higher authority. The responsibility for refusal to obey rests with the member, who shall subsequently be required to justify the refusal.

Unless it would jeopardize the safety of any individual, members who are presented with a lawful order that is in conflict with a previous lawful order, department policy or other directive shall respectfully inform the issuing supervisor of the conflict. The issuing supervisor is responsible for either resolving the conflict or clarifying that the lawful order is intended to countermand the previous lawful order or directive, in which case the member is obliged to comply. Members who are compelled to follow a conflicting lawful order after having given the issuing supervisor the opportunity to correct the conflict, will not be held accountable for disobedience of the lawful order or directive that was initially issued.

## *Standards of Conduct*

---

The person countermanding the original order shall notify, in writing, the person issuing the original order, indicating the action taken and the reason.

### **340.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Supervisors and managers are required to follow all policies and procedures and may be subject to discipline for:

- (a) Failure to be reasonably aware of the performance of their subordinates or to provide appropriate guidance and control.
- (b) Failure to promptly and fully report any known misconduct of a member to his/her immediate supervisor or to document such misconduct appropriately or as required by policy.
- (c) Directing a subordinate to violate a policy or directive, acquiesce to such a violation, or are indifferent to any such violation by a subordinate.
- (d) The unequal or disparate exercise of authority on the part of a supervisor toward any member for malicious or other improper purpose.

### **340.4 GENERAL STANDARDS**

Members shall conduct themselves, whether on- or off-duty, in accordance with the United States and California Constitutions and all applicable laws, ordinances and rules enacted or established pursuant to legal authority.

Members shall familiarize themselves with policies and procedures and are responsible for compliance with each. Members should seek clarification and guidance from supervisors in the event of any perceived ambiguity or uncertainty.

Discipline may be initiated for any good cause. It is not mandatory that a specific policy or rule violation be cited to sustain discipline. This policy is not intended to cover every possible type of misconduct.

### **340.5 CAUSES FOR DISCIPLINE**

The following are illustrative of causes for disciplinary action. This list is not intended to cover every possible type of misconduct and does not preclude the recommendation of disciplinary action for violation of other rules, standards, ethics and specific action or inaction that is detrimental to efficient department service:

#### **340.5.1 LAWS, RULES AND ORDERS**

- (a) Violation of, or ordering or instructing a subordinate to violate any policy, procedure, rule, order, directive, requirement or failure to follow instructions contained in department or County manuals.
- (b) Disobedience of any legal directive or order issued by any department member of a higher rank.
- (c) Violation of federal, state, local or administrative laws, rules or regulations.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Standards of Conduct*

---

#### 340.5.2 ETHICS

- (a) Using or disclosing one's status as a member of the Merced County Sheriff's Office in any way that could reasonably be perceived as an attempt to gain influence or authority for non-department business or activity.
- (b) The wrongful or unlawful exercise of authority on the part of any member for malicious purpose, personal gain, willful deceit or any other improper purpose.
- (c) The receipt or acceptance of a reward, fee or gift from any person for service incident to the performance of the member's duties (lawful subpoena fees and authorized work permits excepted).
- (d) Acceptance of fees, gifts or money contrary to the rules of this department and/or laws of the state.
- (e) Offer or acceptance of a bribe or gratuity.
- (f) Misappropriation or misuse of public funds, property, personnel or services.
- (g) Any other failure to abide by the standards of ethical conduct.

#### 340.5.3 DISCRIMINATION, OPPRESSION OR FAVORITISM

Discriminating against, oppressing or providing favoritism to any person because of age, race, color, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin, ancestry, marital status, physical or mental disability, medical condition or other classification protected by law, or intentionally denying or impeding another in the exercise or enjoyment of any right, privilege, power or immunity, knowing the conduct is unlawful.

#### 340.5.4 RELATIONSHIPS

- (a) Unwelcome solicitation of a personal or sexual relationship while on-duty or through the use of one's official capacity.
- (b) Engaging in on-duty sexual activity including, but not limited to, sexual intercourse, excessive displays of public affection or other sexual contact.
- (c) Establishing or maintaining an inappropriate personal or financial relationship, as a result of an investigation, with a known victim, witness, suspect or defendant while a case is being investigated or prosecuted, or as a direct result of any official contact.
- (d) Associating with or joining a criminal gang, organized crime and/or criminal syndicate when the member knows or reasonably should know of the criminal nature of the organization. This includes any organization involved in a definable criminal activity or enterprise, except as specifically directed and authorized by this department.
- (e) Associating on a personal, rather than official basis with persons who demonstrate recurring involvement in serious violations of state or federal laws after the member knows, or reasonably should know of such criminal activities, except as specifically directed and authorized by this department.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Standards of Conduct*

---

#### 340.5.5 ATTENDANCE

- (a) Leaving the job to which the member is assigned during duty hours without reasonable excuse and proper permission and approval.
- (b) Unexcused or unauthorized absence or tardiness.
- (c) Excessive absenteeism or abuse of leave privileges.
- (d) Failure to report to work or to place of assignment at time specified and fully prepared to perform duties without reasonable excuse.

#### 340.5.6 UNAUTHORIZED ACCESS, DISCLOSURE OR USE

- (a) Unauthorized and inappropriate intentional release of confidential or protected information, materials, data, forms or reports obtained as a result of the member's position with this department.
  - 1. Members of this department shall not disclose the name, address or image of any victim of human trafficking except as authorized by law (Penal Code § 293).
- (b) Disclosing to any unauthorized person any active investigation information.
- (c) The use of any information, photograph, video or other recording obtained or accessed as a result of employment or appointment to this department for personal or financial gain or without the express authorization of the Sheriff or the authorized designee.
- (d) Loaning, selling, allowing unauthorized use, giving away or appropriating any Merced County Sheriff's Office badge, uniform, identification card or department property for personal use, personal gain or any other improper or unauthorized use or purpose.
- (e) Using department resources in association with any portion of an independent civil action. These resources include, but are not limited to, personnel, vehicles, equipment and non-subpoenaed records.

#### 340.5.7 EFFICIENCY

- (a) Neglect of duty.
- (b) Unsatisfactory work performance including, but not limited to, failure, incompetence, inefficiency or delay in performing and/or carrying out proper orders, work assignments or the instructions of supervisors without a reasonable and bona fide excuse.
- (c) Concealing, attempting to conceal, removing or destroying defective or incompetent work.
- (d) Unauthorized sleeping during on-duty time or assignments.
- (e) Failure to notify the Department within 24 hours of any change in residence address, contact telephone numbers or marital status.

#### 340.5.8 PERFORMANCE

- (a) Failure to disclose or misrepresenting material facts, or making any false or misleading statement on any application, examination form, or other official document, report or form, or during the course of any work-related investigation.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Standards of Conduct*

---

- (b) The falsification of any work-related records, making misleading entries or statements with the intent to deceive or the willful and unauthorized removal, alteration, destruction and/or mutilation of any department record, public record, book, paper or document.
- (c) Failure to participate in, or giving false or misleading statements, or misrepresenting or omitting material information to a supervisor or other person in a position of authority, in connection with any investigation or in the reporting of any department-related business.
- (d) Being untruthful or knowingly making false, misleading or malicious statements that are reasonably calculated to harm the reputation, authority or official standing of this department or its members.
- (e) Disparaging remarks or conduct concerning duly constituted authority to the extent that such conduct disrupts the efficiency of this department or subverts the good order, efficiency and discipline of this department or that would tend to discredit any of its members.
- (f) Unlawful gambling or unlawful betting at any time or any place. Legal gambling or betting under any of the following conditions:
  - 1. While on department premises.
  - 2. At any work site, while on-duty or while in uniform, or while using any department equipment or system.
  - 3. Gambling activity undertaken as part of a deputy official duties and with the express knowledge and permission of a direct supervisor is exempt from this prohibition.
- (g) Improper political activity including:
  - 1. Unauthorized attendance while on-duty at official legislative or political sessions.
  - 2. Solicitations, speeches or distribution of campaign literature for or against any political candidate or position while on-duty or, on department property except as expressly authorized by County policy, the memorandum of understanding, or the Sheriff.
- (h) Engaging in political activities during assigned working hours except as expressly authorized by County policy, the memorandum of understanding, or the Sheriff.
- (i) Any act on- or off-duty that brings discredit to this department.

#### 340.5.9 CONDUCT

- (a) Failure of any member to promptly and fully report activities on his/her part or the part of any other member where such activities resulted in contact with any other law enforcement agency or that may result in criminal prosecution or discipline under this policy.
- (b) Unreasonable and unwarranted force to a person encountered or a person under arrest.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Standards of Conduct*

---

- (c) Exceeding lawful peace officer powers by unreasonable, unlawful or excessive conduct.
- (d) Unauthorized or unlawful fighting, threatening or attempting to inflict unlawful bodily harm on another.
- (e) Engaging in horseplay that reasonably could result in injury or property damage.
- (f) Discourteous, disrespectful or discriminatory treatment of any member of the public or any member of this department or the County.
- (g) Use of obscene, indecent, profane or derogatory language while on-duty or in uniform.
- (h) Criminal, dishonest, or disgraceful conduct, whether on- or off-duty, that adversely affects the member's relationship with this department.
- (i) Unauthorized possession of, loss of, or damage to department property or the property of others, or endangering it through carelessness or maliciousness.
- (j) Attempted or actual theft of department property; misappropriation or misuse of public funds, property, personnel or the services or property of others; unauthorized removal or possession of department property or the property of another person.
- (k) Activity that is incompatible with a member's conditions of employment or appointment as established by law or that violates a provision of any memorandum of understanding or contract to include fraud in securing the appointment or hire.
- (l) Initiating any civil action for recovery of any damages or injuries incurred in the course and scope of employment or appointment without first notifying the Sheriff of such action.
- (m) Any other on- or off-duty conduct which any member knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming a member of this department, is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or tends to reflect unfavorably upon this department or its members.

#### 340.5.10 SAFETY

- (a) Failure to observe or violating department safety standards or safe working practices.
- (b) Failure to maintain current licenses or certifications required for the assignment or position (e.g., driver license, first aid).
- (c) Failure to maintain good physical condition sufficient to adequately and safely perform law enforcement duties.
- (d) Unsafe firearm or other dangerous weapon handling to include loading or unloading firearms in an unsafe manner, either on- or off- duty.
- (e) Carrying, while on the premises of the work place, any firearm or other lethal weapon that is not authorized by the member's appointing authority.
- (f) Unsafe or improper driving habits or actions in the course of employment or appointment.
- (g) Any personal action contributing to a preventable traffic collision.

## *Standards of Conduct*

---

- (h) Concealing or knowingly failing to report any on-the-job or work-related accident or injury as soon as practicable but within 24 hours.

### 340.5.11 INTOXICANTS

- (a) Reporting for work or being at work while intoxicated or when the member's ability to perform assigned duties is impaired due to the use of alcohol, medication or drugs, whether legal, prescribed or illegal.
- (b) Possession or use of alcohol at any work site or while on-duty, except as authorized in the performance of an official assignment. A member who is authorized to consume alcohol is not permitted to do so to such a degree that it may impair on-duty performance.
- (c) Unauthorized possession, use of, or attempting to bring a controlled substance, illegal drug or non-prescribed medication to any work site.

# Information Technology Use

## 342.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the proper use of department information technology resources, including computers, electronic devices, hardware, software and systems.

### 342.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Computer system** - All computers (on site and portable), electronic devices, hardware, software, and resources owned, leased, rented or licensed by the Merced County Sheriff's Office that are provided for official use by its members. This includes all access to, and use of, Internet Service Providers (ISP) or other service providers provided by or through the Department or department funding.

**Hardware** - Includes, but is not limited to, computers, tablets, computer terminals, network equipment, electronic devices, telephones, including cellular and satellite, pagers, modems or any other tangible computer device generally understood to comprise hardware.

**Software** - Includes, but is not limited to, all computer programs, systems and applications, including shareware. This does not include files created by the individual user.

**Temporary file, permanent file or file** - Any electronic document, information or data residing or located, in whole or in part, on the system including, but not limited to, spreadsheets, calendar entries, appointments, tasks, notes, letters, reports, messages, photographs or videos.

## 342.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that members shall use information technology resources, including computers, software and systems, that are issued or maintained by the Department in a professional manner and in accordance with this policy.

## 342.3 PRIVACY EXPECTATION

Members forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to emails, texts or anything published, shared, transmitted or maintained through file-sharing software or any Internet site that is accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any department computer system.

The Department reserves the right to access, audit and disclose, for whatever reason, any message, including attachments, and any information accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed over any technology that is issued or maintained by the Department, including the department email system, computer network and/or any information placed into storage on any department system or device. This includes records of all keystrokes or Web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network. The fact that access to a database, service or website requires a username or password will not create an expectation of privacy if it is accessed through department computers, electronic devices or networks.

## *Information Technology Use*

---

However, the Department may not require a member to disclose a personal username or password or open a personal social website, except when access is reasonably believed to be relevant to the investigation of allegations of work-related misconduct (Labor Code § 980).

### **342.4 RESTRICTED USE**

Members shall not access computers, devices, software or systems for which they have not received prior authorization or the required training. Members shall immediately report unauthorized access or use of computers, devices, software or systems by another member to their supervisors or Patrol Lieutenants.

Members shall not use another person's access passwords, logon information and other individual security data, protocols and procedures unless directed to do so by a supervisor.

#### **342.4.1 SOFTWARE**

Members shall not copy or duplicate any copyrighted or licensed software except for a single copy for backup purposes in accordance with the software company's copyright and license agreement.

To reduce the risk of a computer virus or malicious software, members shall not install any unlicensed or unauthorized software on any department computer. Members shall not install personal copies of any software onto any department computer.

When related to criminal investigations, software program files may be downloaded only with the approval of the information systems technology (IT) staff and with the authorization of the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

No member shall knowingly make, acquire or use unauthorized copies of computer software that is not licensed to the Department while on department premises, computer systems or electronic devices. Such unauthorized use of software exposes the Department and involved members to severe civil and criminal penalties.

Introduction of software by members should only occur as part of the automated maintenance or update process of department- or County-approved or installed programs by the original manufacturer, producer or developer of the software.

Any other introduction of software requires prior authorization from Information Systems staff and a full scan for malicious attachments.

#### **342.4.2 HARDWARE**

Access to technology resources provided by or through the Department shall be strictly limited to department-related activities. Data stored on or available through department computer systems shall only be accessed by authorized members who are engaged in an active investigation or assisting in an active investigation, or who otherwise have a legitimate law enforcement or department-related purpose to access such data. Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by a supervisor.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Information Technology Use*

---

#### **342.4.3 INTERNET USE**

Internet access provided by or through the Department shall be strictly limited to department-related activities. Internet sites containing information that is not appropriate or applicable to department use and which shall not be intentionally accessed include, but are not limited to, adult forums, pornography, gambling, chat rooms and similar or related Internet sites. Certain exceptions may be permitted with the express approval of a supervisor as a function of a member's assignment.

Downloaded information shall be limited to messages, mail and data files.

#### **342.4.4 OFF-DUTY USE**

Members shall only use technology resources provided by the Department while on-duty or in conjunction with specific on-call assignments unless specifically authorized by a supervisor. This includes the use of telephones, cell phones, texting, email or any other "off the clock" work-related activities. This also applies to personally owned devices that are used to access department resources.

Refer to the Personal Communication Devices Policy for guidelines regarding off-duty use of personally owned technology.

#### **342.5 PROTECTION OF AGENCY SYSTEMS AND FILES**

All members have a duty to protect the computer system and related systems and devices from physical and environmental damage and are responsible for the correct use, operation, care and maintenance of the computer system.

Members shall ensure department computers and access terminals are not viewable by persons who are not authorized users. Computers and terminals should be secured, users logged off and password protections enabled whenever the user is not present. Access passwords, logon information and other individual security data, protocols and procedures are confidential information and are not to be shared. Password length, format, structure and content shall meet the prescribed standards required by the computer system or as directed by a supervisor and shall be changed at intervals as directed by IT staff or a supervisor.

It is prohibited for a member to allow an unauthorized user to access the computer system at any time or for any reason. Members shall promptly report any unauthorized access to the computer system or suspected intrusion from outside sources (including the Internet) to a supervisor.

#### **342.6 INSPECTION OR REVIEW**

A supervisor or the authorized designee has the express authority to inspect or review the computer system, all temporary or permanent files, related electronic systems or devices, and any contents thereof, whether such inspection or review is in the ordinary course of his/her supervisory duties or based on cause.

Reasons for inspection or review may include, but are not limited to, computer system malfunctions, problems or general computer system failure, a lawsuit against the Department

## *Information Technology Use*

---

involving one of its members or a member's duties, an alleged or suspected violation of any department policy, a request for disclosure of data, or a need to perform or provide a service.

The IT staff may extract, download or otherwise obtain any and all temporary or permanent files residing or located in or on the department computer system when requested by a supervisor or during the course of regular duties that require such information.

### **342.7 DEPARTMENT EMAIL COMMUNICATION**

In order to facilitate department wide communication of significant events and policy in a timely manner, all personnel will check their county e-mail account at least once during their shift; however, Operations employees should check their county e-mail as often as practical.

If the employee does not have access to a county computer due to his/her assignment, the employee can still check county e-mail by remote access via the INTERNET.

Employees may visit this address: [www.co.merced.ca.us](http://www.co.merced.ca.us) or [www.mercedsheriff.com](http://www.mercedsheriff.com)

After the employee accesses this site, he/she will find at the bottom of each site an icon which clearly states "Employee Email System". This will direct the employee to a sign-on screen. The procedures and credentials used for accessing his/her employee email is the same as they are for other Merced County/Merced County Sheriff, Network related databases.

## Report Preparation

### 344.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Report preparation is a major part of each deputy's job. The purpose of reports is to document sufficient information to refresh the deputy's memory and to provide sufficient information for follow-up investigation and successful prosecution. Report writing is the subject of substantial formalized training and on-the-job training.

#### 344.1.1 REPORT PREPARATION

Employees should ensure that reports are sufficiently detailed for their purpose and free from errors prior to submission. It is the responsibility of the assigned employee to complete and submit all reports taken during the shift before going off-duty unless permission to hold the report has been approved by a supervisor. Generally, reports requiring prompt follow-up action on active leads, or arrest reports where the suspect remains in custody should not be held.

Handwritten reports must be prepared legibly. If the report is not legible, the submitting employee will be required by the reviewing supervisor to promptly make corrections and resubmit the report. Employees who dictate reports shall use appropriate grammar, as content is not the responsibility of the typist. Employees who generate reports on computers are subject to all requirements of this policy.

All reports shall accurately reflect the identity of the persons involved, all pertinent information seen, heard or assimilated by any other sense, and any actions taken. Employees shall not suppress, conceal or distort the facts of any reported incident, nor shall any employee make a false report orally or in writing. Generally, the reporting employee's opinions should not be included in reports unless specifically identified as such.

#### 344.1.2 REPORT COMPLETION

All uniform and patrol deputies will complete and turn in all reports at the end of their shift. The Supervisor of the shift may allow deputies to complete non priority reports later, but only with prior permission. All in custody reports and all felony reports will be turned in at the end of the deputy's shift.

For purposes of this section, deputies assigned to work Merced College Law Enforcement Manager, School Resource Officer, Civil Division, Court Security and any other uniform assignment are bound to this policy regarding their reports.

#### 344.1.3 INVESTIGATIONS DIVISION REPORT COMPLETION

Deputies who are assigned as Investigators or to special investigative units shall complete their reports based on the direction of their immediate supervisor.

When a deputy is transferred out of Investigations, they shall turn in all reports, photos, digital pictures, case files, audio recordings, video recordings, notes, any other item(s) or evidence related to their investigations to their supervisor. This shall be completed at least one week prior

## *Report Preparation*

---

to their departure so that their supervisor can check as to the thoroughness and completion of the material.

### **344.2 REQUIRED REPORTING**

Written reports are required in all of the following situations on the appropriate department approved form unless otherwise approved by a supervisor.

#### **344.2.1 CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

When a member responds to a call for service, or as a result of self-initiated activity becomes aware of any activity where a crime has occurred, the member shall document the incident regardless of whether a victim desires prosecution. Activity to be documented in a written report includes:

- (a) All arrests
- (b) All felony crimes
- (c) Non-Felony incidents involving threats or stalking behavior
- (d) Situations covered by separate policy. These include:
  - 1. Use of Force Policy
  - 2. Domestic Violence Policy
  - 3. Child Abuse Policy
  - 4. Adult Abuse Policy
  - 5. Hate Crimes Policy
  - 6. Suspicious Activity Reporting Policy
- (e) All misdemeanor crimes where the victim desires a report

Misdemeanor crimes where the victim does not desire a report shall be documented using the department-approved alternative reporting method (e.g., dispatch log).

#### **344.2.2 NON-CRIMINAL ACTIVITY**

The following incidents shall be documented using the appropriate approved report:

- (a) Anytime a deputy points a firearm at any person
- (b) Any use of force against any person by a member of this department (see the Use of Force Policy)
- (c) Any firearm discharge (see the Firearms Policy)
- (d) Anytime a person is reported missing, regardless of jurisdiction (see the Missing Persons Policy)
- (e) Any found property or found evidence

## *Report Preparation*

---

- (f) Any traffic collisions above the minimum reporting level (see Traffic Collision Reporting Policy)
- (g) Suspicious incidents that may indicate a potential for crimes against children or that a child's safety is in jeopardy
- (h) All protective custody detentions
- (i) Suspicious incidents that may place the public or others at risk
- (j) Whenever the employee believes the circumstances should be documented or at the direction of a supervisor

### 344.2.3 DEATH CASES

Death investigations require specific investigation methods depending on circumstances and should be handled in accordance with the Death Investigations Policy. The handling deputy should notify and apprise a supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the incident to determine how to proceed. The following cases shall be appropriately investigated and documented using the approved report:

- (a) Sudden or accidental deaths.
- (b) Suicides.
- (c) Homicide or suspected homicide.
- (d) Unattended deaths (No physician or qualified hospice care in the 20 days preceding death).
- (e) Found dead bodies or body parts.

### 344.2.4 INJURY OR DAMAGE BY COUNTY PERSONNEL

Reports shall be taken if an injury occurs that is a result of an act of a County employee. Additionally, reports shall be taken involving damage to County property or County equipment.

### 344.2.5 MISCELLANEOUS INJURIES

Any injury that is reported to this department shall require a report when:

- (a) The injury is a result of drug overdose
- (b) Attempted suicide
- (c) The injury is major/serious, whereas death could result
- (d) The circumstances surrounding the incident are suspicious in nature and it is desirable to record the event

The above reporting requirements are not intended to be all-inclusive. A supervisor may direct an employee to document any incident he/she deems necessary.

## *Report Preparation*

---

### **344.2.6 MANDATORY REPORTING OF JUVENILE GUNSHOT INJURIES**

A report shall be taken when any incident in which a child 18 years or younger suffered an unintentional or self-inflicted gunshot wound. The Records Division shall notify the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) of the incident, on a form provided by the state. Forms may be obtained from the CDPH website (Penal Code § 23685).

### **344.2.7 ALTERNATE REPORTING FOR VICTIMS**

Reports that may be submitted by the public via online or other self-completed reporting processes include:

- (a) Lost property.
- (b) Misdemeanor thefts of property, other than firearms or materials that threaten public safety, when there is no suspect information, serial number or ability to trace the item.
  - 1. Misdemeanor thefts of cellular telephones may be reported even though they have a serial number.
- (c) Misdemeanor vandalism with no suspect information and no hate crime implications.
- (d) Vehicle burglaries with no suspect information or evidence.
- (e) Stolen vehicle attempts with no suspect information or evidence.
- (f) Annoying telephone calls with no suspect information.
- (g) Identity theft without an identifiable suspect.
- (h) Online or email fraud solicitations without an identifiable suspect and if the financial loss classifies the crime as a misdemeanor.
- (i) Hit-and-run vehicle collisions with no suspect or suspect vehicle.
- (j) Supplemental property lists.

Members at the scene of one of the above incidents should not refer the reporting party to an alternate means of reporting without authorization from a supervisor. Members may refer victims to online victim assistance programs (e.g., Federal Communications Commission (FCC) website for identity theft, Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) website for computer crimes).

### **344.3 GENERAL POLICY OF EXPEDITIOUS REPORTING**

In general, all deputies and supervisors shall act with promptness and efficiency in the preparation and processing of all reports. An incomplete report, unorganized reports or reports delayed without supervisory approval are not acceptable. Reports shall be processed according to established priorities or according to special priority necessary under exceptional circumstances.

#### **344.3.1 GENERAL POLICY OF HANDWRITTEN REPORTS**

Some incidents and report forms lend themselves to block print rather than typing. In general, the narrative portion of those reports where an arrest is made or when there is a long narrative should be typed or dictated.

## *Report Preparation*

---

Supervisors may require, with the foregoing general policy in mind, block printing or typing of reports of any nature for departmental consistency.

### **344.3.2 GENERAL USE OF OTHER HANDWRITTEN FORMS**

County, state and federal agency forms may be block printed as appropriate. In general, the form itself may make the requirement for typing apparent.

### **344.4 REPORT CORRECTIONS**

Supervisors shall review reports for content and accuracy. If a correction is necessary, the reviewing supervisor will refer the report back to the originating deputy for making the corrections(s). It shall be the responsibility of the originating deputy to ensure that any report returned for correction is processed in a timely manner. Detectives, upon the recommendation of the Detective Sergeant, may be authorized with the administrative authority by the Operations Captain to approve reports.

### **344.5 REPORT CHANGES OR ALTERATIONS**

Reports that have been approved by a supervisor and submitted to the Records Division for filing and distribution shall not be modified or altered except by way of a supplemental report. Reviewed reports that have not yet been submitted to the Records Division may be corrected or modified by the authoring deputy only with the knowledge and authorization of the reviewing supervisor.

## Media Relations

### 346.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for media releases and media access to scenes of disasters, criminal investigations, emergencies and other law enforcement activities.

### 346.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The ultimate authority and responsibility for the release of information to the media shall remain with the Sheriff, however, in situations not warranting immediate notice to the Sheriff and in situations where the Sheriff has given prior approval, the Undersheriff and designated Public Information Officer(s) may prepare and release information to the media in accordance with this policy and the applicable law.

#### 346.2.1 MEDIA REQUEST

Any media request for information or access to a law enforcement situation shall be referred to the designated department media representative, or if unavailable, the Sheriff or Undersheriff. Prior to releasing any information to the media, employees shall consider the following:

- (a) At no time shall any employee of this department make any comment or release any official information to the media without prior approval from a supervisor or the designated department media representative.
- (b) In situations involving multiple law enforcement agencies, every reasonable effort should be made to coordinate media releases with the authorized representative of each involved agency prior to the release of any information by this department.
- (c) Under no circumstance should any member of this department make any comments to the media regarding any law enforcement incident not involving this department without prior approval of the Sheriff.

### 346.3 MEDIA ACCESS

Authorized members of the media shall be provided access to scenes of disasters, criminal investigations, emergencies and other law enforcement activities subject to the following conditions (Penal Code § 409.5(d)):

- (a) The media representative shall produce valid press credentials that shall be prominently displayed at all times while in areas otherwise closed to the public.
- (b) Media representatives may be prevented from interfering with emergency operations and criminal investigations.
  - 1. Reasonable effort should be made to provide a safe staging area for the media that is near the incident and that will not interfere with emergency or criminal investigation operations. All information released to the media should

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Media Relations

---

be coordinated through the department Public Information Officer or other designated spokesperson.

2. Whenever the presence of media or other aircraft pose a threat to public or officer safety or significantly hampers incident operations, the field supervisor should consider requesting a Temporary Flight Restriction (TFR). All requests for a TFR should be routed through the Incident Commander. The TFR request should include specific information regarding the perimeter and altitude necessary for the incident and should be requested through the appropriate control tower. If the control tower is not known, the Federal Aviation Administration should be contacted (14 CFR 91.137).
- (c) No member of this department who is under investigation shall be subjected to media visits or interviews without the consent of the involved employee (Government Code § 3303(e)).
- (d) Media interviews with individuals who are in custody should not be permitted without the approval of the Sheriff and the express consent of the person in custody.

A tactical operation should be handled in the same manner as a crime scene, except the news media shall be permitted within the outer perimeter of the scene, subject to any restrictions as determined by the supervisor in charge. Department members shall not jeopardize a tactical operation in order to accommodate the news media. All comments to the media shall be coordinated through a supervisor or the Public Information Officer.

#### 346.3.1 PROVIDING ADVANCE INFORMATION

To protect the safety and rights of deputies and other persons, advance information about planned actions by law enforcement personnel, such as movement of persons in custody or the execution of an arrest or search warrant, should not be disclosed to the news media, nor should media representatives be invited to be present at such actions except with the prior approval of the Sheriff.

Any exceptions to the above should only be considered for the furtherance of legitimate law enforcement purposes. Prior to approving any exception the Sheriff will consider, at minimum, whether the release of information or presence of the media would unreasonably endanger any individual, prejudice the rights of any person or is otherwise prohibited by law.

#### 346.4 SCOPE OF INFORMATION SUBJECT TO RELEASE

The Department will maintain a daily information log of significant law enforcement activities that shall be made available, upon request, to media representatives through the Public Information Officer. This log will generally contain the following information:

- (a) The date, time, location, case number, type of crime, extent of injury or loss, and names of individuals (except confidential informants) involved in crimes occurring within this jurisdiction unless the release of such information would endanger the safety of any individual or jeopardize the successful completion of any ongoing investigation

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Media Relations*

---

- (b) The date, time, location, case number, name, birth date and charges for each person arrested by this department unless the release of such information would endanger the safety of any individual or jeopardize the successful completion of any ongoing investigation
- (c) The time and location of other significant law enforcement activities or requests for service with a brief summary of the incident subject to the restrictions of this policy and applicable law

At no time shall identifying information pertaining to a juvenile arrestee (13 years of age and under), victim or witness be publicly released without prior approval of a competent court. The identity of a minor 14 years of age or older shall not be publicly disclosed unless the minor has been arrested for a serious felony and the release of such information has been approved by the Undersheriff (Welfare and Institutions Code § 827.5).

Identifying information concerning deceased individuals shall not be released to the media until notification of next of kin or otherwise cleared through the Coroner's Office.

Any requests for copies of related reports or additional information not contained in this log shall be referred to the designated department media representative, the custodian of records, or if unavailable, to the Undersheriff. Such requests will generally be processed in accordance with the provisions of the Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250, et seq.).

#### 346.4.1 RESTRICTED INFORMATION

It shall be the responsibility of the authorized employee dealing with media requests to ensure that restricted information is not inappropriately released to the media by this department. When in doubt, authorized and available legal counsel should be obtained.

# Court and Public Appearances, Subpoenas And Attire Standards

## 348.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for department members who must appear in court. It will allow the Merced County Sheriff's Office to cover any related work absences and keep the Department informed about relevant legal matters.

### 348.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**On-Call** - When an employee has appeared in court, or is at the time on-duty, and has been told by a member of the court that he/she is free to leave the court or return to duty, subject to being available by phone or pager if called back.

**Standby** - When an employee receives a subpoena of a type which allows him or her to not appear in court, but remain available by phone or pager so that he or she may be directed to appear in court within a reasonable amount of time.

**Trailing Status** - When an employee remains on standby status for additional court sessions until notified otherwise.

**Mandatory Appearance** - Subpoenas marked as mandatory appearance require an employee's physical appearance in the specified court. Failure to timely appear in the specified court, either intentionally or by negligence, may result in disciplinary action.

## 348.2 POLICY

Merced County Sheriff's Office members will respond appropriately to all subpoenas and any other court-ordered appearances.

### 348.2.1 SERVICE OF SUBPOENA

Service of a subpoena requiring the appearance of any department employee in connection with a matter arising out of the employee's course and scope of official duties may be accomplished by personal service on the employee or by delivery of two copies of the subpoena on the employee's supervisor or other authorized departmental agent (Government Code § 68097.1 and Penal Code § 1328(c)). Subpoena service is also acceptable by courier or court liaison from the court to this department through the Civil Division. The Civil Division acts as the subpoena clerk for the Sheriff's Office.

Employees should be served by electronic means when possible. When served by electronic means, the employees will be notified by e-mail on their county e-mail of a pending subpoena for court appearance. Subpoenas from the Merced County District Attorney's Office will be direct to the employees county intranet subpoena site for service. Service from their email is the best method. Supervisors will be notified by e-mail of subpoenas that are requesting to be served that are not received within the 5 working day requirement per penal code section 1328. It will be the duty of the supervisor to determine the appropriate action to take regarding these subpoenas.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Court and Public Appearances, Subpoenas And Attire Standards*

---

### 348.2.2 VALID SUBPOENAS

No subpoena shall be accepted for an employee of this department unless it has been properly served and verified to have originated from a recognized legal authority.

### 348.2.3 ACCEPTANCE OF SUBPOENA

- (a) Only the employee named in a subpoena, his/her immediate supervisor or the department Civil Division shall be authorized to accept service of a subpoena. (Penal Code § 1328(c)). The Civil Division shall maintain a chronological log of all department subpoenas and provide a copy of the subpoena to each involved employee and their supervisor, when dealing with subpoenas outside the county intranet subpoena system.
- (b) Any supervisor accepting a subpoena on behalf of another employee shall immediately check available schedules to determine the availability of the named employee for the date listed on the subpoena.
- (c) Once a subpoena has been received by the Civil Division, a copy of the subpoena shall be promptly provided to the individually named employee and their supervisor.

### 348.2.4 REFUSAL OF SUBPOENA

Except where previous arrangements with the issuing court exist, training, vacations and regularly scheduled days off are not valid reasons for refusing a subpoena or missing court. If, due to illness or injury, the named employee is unable to appear in court as directed by a previously served subpoena, he/she shall, at least one hour before the appointed date and time, inform the attorney that issued the subpoena or the attorney's office of his/her absence. It shall then be the responsibility of Sheriff's Office employees to notify the issuing authority his/her unavailability to appear.

If the Civil Division or immediate supervisor knows that he/she will be unable to deliver a copy of the subpoena to the named employee within sufficient time for the named employee to comply with the subpoena, the Civil Division or supervisor may refuse to accept service (Penal Code § 1328(d)).

If a subpoena is presented for service to the Civil Division or immediate supervisor less than five working days prior to the date listed for an appearance the Civil Division or supervisor is not reasonably certain that the service can be completed, he/she may refuse to accept service (Penal Code § 1328(e)).

If, after initially accepting service of a subpoena, the Civil Division or a supervisor determines that he/she will be unable to deliver a copy of the subpoena to the individually named employee within sufficient time for the named employee to comply with the subpoena, the Civil Division shall notify the server or the attorney named on the subpoena of such not less than 48 hours prior to the date listed for the appearance (Penal Code § 1328(f)).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Court and Public Appearances, Subpoenas And Attire Standards*

---

### **348.2.5 COURT STANDBY**

To facilitate court standby agreements with the courts, employees are required to provide and maintain current information of their address and phone number with the Department. Employees are required to notify the Department within 24 hours of any change in residence address, home phone number, cell phone number, and to provide accurate and reasonably reliable means or methods for contact.

If an employee on standby changes his/her location during the day, the employee shall notify the attorney who issued the subpoena or the attorney's office of how he/she can be reached by telephone. Employees are required to remain on standby each day the case is trailing. In a criminal case the Deputy District Attorney handling the case is the only person authorized to excuse an employee from standby status.

### **348.2.6 SUPERVISORY NOTIFICATION**

In the event an employee is served with a civil summons or subpoena, or other court orders which are not common to regular duties, the employee must notify his/her supervisor immediately.

### **348.3 SUBPOENAS**

The Civil Division is authorized to receive a subpoena on behalf of this department or any of its members may do so. This may be accomplished by personal service to the deputy or by delivery of two copies of the subpoena to the deputy's supervisor or other authorized departmental agent (Civil Division) (Government Code § 68097.1; Penal Code § 1328(c)).

The party that issues a civil subpoena to a deputy to testify as a witness must tender the statutory fee of \$275 with the subpoena for each day that an appearance is required before service is accepted of the subpoena (Government Code § 68097.2).

An immediate supervisor or authorized individual (Civil Division) may refuse to accept service for a criminal subpoena if (Penal Code § 1328(d)(e)):

- (a) He/she knows that he/she will be unable to deliver a copy of the subpoena to the named deputy within sufficient time for the named deputy to comply with the subpoena.
- (b) It is less than five working days prior to the date listed for an appearance and he/she is not reasonably certain that service can be completed.

If, after initially accepting service of a criminal subpoena, a supervisor or other authorized individual determines that he/she is unable to deliver a copy of the subpoena to the named deputy within sufficient time for the named deputy to comply with the subpoena, the supervisor or the Civil Division shall notify the server or the attorney named on the subpoena of such not less than 48 hours prior to the date listed for the appearance (Penal Code § 1328(f)).

### **348.3.1 SPECIAL NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS**

Any member who is subpoenaed to testify, agrees to testify or provides information on behalf of or at the request of any party other than the County Counsel or the prosecutor shall notify his/her immediate supervisor without delay regarding:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Court and Public Appearances, Subpoenas And Attire Standards*

---

- (a) Any civil case where the County or one of its members, as a result of his/her official capacity, is a party.
- (b) Any civil case where any other city, county, state or federal unit of government or a member of any such unit of government, as a result of his/her official capacity, is a party.
- (c) Any criminal proceeding where the member is called to testify or provide information on behalf of the defense.
- (d) Any civil action stemming from the member's on-duty activity or because of his/her association with the Merced County Sheriff's Office.
- (e) Any personnel or disciplinary matter when called to testify or to provide information by a government entity other than the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

The supervisor will then notify the Sheriff's Administration and/or the appropriate prosecuting attorney as may be indicated by the case. The Supervisor should determine if additional legal support is necessary.

No member shall be retaliated against for testifying in any matter.

### **348.3.2 CIVIL SUBPOENA**

The Department will compensate members who appear in their official capacities on civil matters arising out of their official duties, as directed by the current memorandum of understanding or collective bargaining agreement.

The Department should seek reimbursement for the member's compensation through the civil attorney of record who subpoenaed the member.

### **348.3.3 OFF-DUTY RELATED SUBPOENAS**

Members receiving valid subpoenas for off-duty actions not related to their employment or appointment will not be compensated for their appearance. Arrangements for time off shall be coordinated through their immediate supervisors.

### **348.4 FAILURE TO APPEAR**

Any member who fails to comply with the terms of any properly served subpoena or court-ordered appearance may be subject to discipline. This includes properly served orders to appear that were issued by a state administrative agency or court orders to appear or respond for traffic court.

### **348.5 STANDBY**

To facilitate standby agreements, members are required to provide and maintain current information on their addresses and contact telephone numbers with the Department.

If a member on standby changes his/her location during the day, the member shall notify the attorney that issued the subpoena or the attorney's office of how he/she can be reached. Members are required to remain on standby until released by the court or the party that issued the subpoena.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Court and Public Appearances, Subpoenas And Attire Standards*

---

### **348.5.1 PREPARATION FOR TESTIMONY**

Before the date of testifying, the subpoenaed deputy shall request a copy of relevant reports and become familiar with their content in order to be prepared for court.

### **348.5.2 COURTROOM ATTIRE**

Employees shall dress in uniform or business attire. Suitable business attire for men would consist of a coat, tie, and dress pants. Suitable business attire for female employees would consist of a dress jacket, dress blouse, and skirt or slacks. Employees appearing in uniform have the option of wearing a Class A or Class B uniform. Further, an employee may wear a Class C uniform if the respective employee's assignment authorizes wearing of the uniform.

Employees shall also conform to those Personal Appearance Standards as set forth in Policy section 1044.

### **348.5.3 EXCEPTIONS**

An employee may deviate from this policy only with the authorization of the appropriate supervisor if the supervisor determines that it would be impractical for the employee to comply with the dress regulations.

## **348.6 COURTROOM PROTOCOL**

When appearing in court, members shall:

- (a) Be punctual and prepared to proceed immediately with the case for which they are scheduled to appear.
- (b) Dress in the department uniform or business attire.
- (c) Observe all rules of the court in which they are appearing and remain alert to changes in the assigned courtroom where their matter is to be heard.

## **348.7 OVERTIME APPEARANCES**

When a member appears in court on his/her off-duty time, he/she will be compensated in accordance with the current memorandum of understanding or collective bargaining agreement.

### **348.7.1 NON-OFFICIAL PERSONAL APPEARANCES FIREARMS POLICY**

Employees who enter this county's court facilities or any court facilities in the United States for any non-official purpose (i.e. personal court matters) are not permitted to carry a firearm or other weapon into the facilities whether the firearm or weapon is department-issued or personal.

### **348.7.2 NON-OFFICIAL PERSONAL APPEARANCES ATTIRE POLICY**

Employees who enter this county's court facilities or any court facilities in the United States for any non-official purpose (i.e. personal court matters) are not permitted to wear any uniform or article of clothing which would identify him/her as an employee of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

## Reserve Deputies

### 350.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Merced County Sheriff's Office Reserve Unit was established to supplement and assist regular sworn sheriff's deputies in their duties. This unit provides professional, sworn reserve deputies who can augment regular staffing levels.

### 350.2 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF SHERIFF'S RESERVE DEPUTIES

The Merced County Sheriff's Office shall endeavor to recruit and appoint to the Reserve Unit only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by this department.

#### 350.2.1 PROCEDURE

All applicants shall be required to meet and pass the same pre-employment procedures as regular sheriff's deputies before appointment.

Before appointment to the Sheriff's Reserve Unit, an applicant must have completed a POST approved basic academy, extended basic academy, or level II and level III training.

#### 350.2.2 APPOINTMENT

Applicants who are selected for appointment to the Sheriff's Reserve Unit shall, on the recommendation of the Sheriff, be sworn in by the Sheriff and take a loyalty oath to observe and obey all of the laws of the land and to carry out their duties to the best of their ability.

#### 350.2.3 RESERVE DEPUTY SHERIFF COMPENSATION

Compensation for reserve deputies is provided as follows:

All reserve deputy appointees will be compensated equivalent to their qualifications (basic academy, reserve level 1, 2 or 3, prior experience, etc). Each reserve deputy will be issued their safety equipment. All property issued to the reserve deputy shall be returned to the Department upon termination or resignation.

Reserve deputy sheriffs do not receive a uniform allowance.

#### 350.2.4 EMPLOYEES WORKING AS RESERVE DEPUTIES

Qualified employees of this department, when authorized, may also serve as reserve deputies. However, the Department must not utilize the services of a reserve or volunteer in such a way that it would violate employment laws or labor agreements (e.g., a detention deputy working as a reserve deputy for reduced or no pay). Therefore, the Reserve Coordinator should consult the Department of Human Resources prior to an employee serving in a reserve or volunteer capacity (29 CFR 553.30).

### 350.3 DUTIES OF RESERVE DEPUTIES

Reserve deputies assist regular deputies in the enforcement of laws and in maintaining peace and order within the community. Assignments of reserve deputies will usually be to augment the patrol

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Reserve Deputies*

---

division or court security division. Reserve deputies may be assigned to other areas within the Department as needed. Reserve Deputies are to work regularly in order to benefit the needs of the department. Retired deputies who become reserve deputies may serve in specialty assignments that are the most conducive for the employee and the office.

Reserve Deputies may be used to augment regular deputy sheriff duties as directed by the Sheriff or his designee. If there is any expansion of current reserve duties, the Sheriff will discuss any changes with the DSA to ensure a cooperative effort between all parties.

#### **350.3.1 POLICY COMPLIANCE**

Sheriff's reserve deputies shall be required to adhere to all departmental policies and procedures. A copy of the policies and procedures will be made available to each reserve deputy upon appointment and he/she shall become thoroughly familiar with these policies.

Whenever a rule, regulation, or guideline in this manual refers to a sworn regular full-time deputy, it shall also apply to a sworn reserve deputy unless by its nature it is inapplicable.

#### **350.3.2 RESERVE DEPUTY ASSIGNMENTS**

All reserve deputies will be assigned to duties by the Reserve Coordinator or his/her designee.

#### **350.3.3 RESERVE COORDINATOR**

The Sheriff shall delegate the responsibility for administering the Reserve Deputy Program to a Reserve Coordinator.

The Reserve Coordinator shall have the responsibility of, but not be limited to:

- (a) Conducting reserve meetings when directed by the Sheriff's Administration
- (b) Establishing and maintaining a reserve call-out roster
- (c) Monitoring individual reserve deputy performance
- (d) Monitoring overall Reserve Program
- (e) Maintaining liaison with the Training Manager
- (f) Approve reports that reserve deputies complete.

#### **350.4 FIELD TRAINING**

Penal Code § 832.6 requires Level II reserve deputies, who have not been released from the immediate supervision requirement per the Completion of the Formal Training Process subsection, to work under the immediate supervision of a peace officer who possesses a Basic POST Certificate.

Reserve deputies have the basic academy training (not level II or level III training only) who have completed the Sheriff's Office FTO program may work alone with the approval of the Reserve Coordinator and Operations Captain.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Reserve Deputies*

---

#### 350.4.1 PRIMARY TRAINING OFFICER

Upon completion of the Academy, reserve deputies who wish to start in the Field Training Program may be assigned to a training officer. The field training training officer will be selected from members of the Field Training program. Should the reserve deputy wish to start his FTO program, the reserve deputy will submit a letter to the reserve coordinator and FTO supervisor stating their interest to commit to the FTO program.

Reserve deputies who do not wish to start the program, but wish to work with patrol deputies, should work with a FTO, when available. If an FTO is not available, the reserve deputy shall work with a deputy that has a Basic POST certificate.

Reserve deputies must receive prior approval from the Reserve Coordinator prior to working in the patrol division.

#### 350.4.2 POLICY MANUAL

Each new reserve deputy will be issued a department policy manual when hired. The reserve deputy shall become knowledgeable of the subject matter as outlined. He/she shall also become proficient with those skills as set forth in the manual.

### **350.5 SUPERVISION OF RESERVE DEPUTIES**

Reserve deputies who have attained the status of Level II shall be under the immediate supervision of a regular sworn deputy (Penal Code 832.6). The immediate supervision requirement shall also continue for reserve deputies who have attained Level I status unless special authorization is received from the Reserve Coordinator with the approval of the Operations Captain.

#### 350.5.1 SPECIAL AUTHORIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Reserve deputies certified as Level I may, with prior authorization of the Reserve Coordinator and on approval of the Operations Captain, be relieved of the "immediate supervision" requirement. Level I reserve deputies may function under the authority of Penal Code § 832.6(a)(1) only for the duration of the assignment or purpose for which the authorization was granted.

In the absence of the Reserve Coordinator, a field supervisor with the approval of the Operations Captain may assign a certified Level I reserve deputy to function under the authority of Penal Code § 832.6(a)(1) for specific purposes and duration.

#### 350.5.2 RESERVE DEPUTY MEETINGS

The Reserve Coordinator may schedule reserve deputy meetings. All reserve deputies are required to attend scheduled meetings. Any absences must be satisfactorily explained to the Reserve Coordinator.

#### 350.5.3 IDENTIFICATION OF RESERVE DEPUTIES

All reserve deputies will be issued a uniform badge and a Department identification card. The uniform badge shall be the same as that worn by a regular full-time deputy. The identification card will be the standard identification card with the exception that "Reserve" will be indicated on the card.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Reserve Deputies*

---

#### 350.5.4 UNIFORM

Reserve deputies shall conform to all uniform regulation and appearance standards of this department.

#### 350.5.5 INVESTIGATIONS AND COMPLAINTS

If a reserve deputy has a complaint made against him/her or becomes involved in an internal investigation, that complaint or internal investigation may be investigated by the Reserve Coordinator, subject to approval by the Operations Captain.

Reserve deputies are considered at-will employees. Government Code § 3300 et seq. applies to reserve deputies with the exception that the right to hearing is limited to the opportunity to clear their name.

Any disciplinary action that may have to be administered to a reserve deputy shall be accomplished as outlined in the Policy Manual.

#### 350.5.6 RESERVE DEPUTY EVALUATIONS

While in training reserves will be continuously evaluated using standardized daily and weekly observation reports. However, reserve deputies do not receive annual evaluations in accordance with Merced County Human Resources policies and procedures.

### **350.6 FIREARMS REQUIREMENTS**

Penal Code § 830.6(a)(1) designates a reserve deputy as having peace officer powers during his/her assigned tour of duty, provided the reserve deputy qualifies or falls within the provisions of Penal Code § 832.6.

#### 350.6.1 CARRYING WEAPON ON DUTY

Penal Code § 830.6(a)(1) permits qualified reserve deputies to carry a loaded firearm while on-duty. It is the policy of this department to allow reserves to carry firearms only while on-duty or to and from duty.

#### 350.6.2 CONCEALED FIREARMS PROHIBITED

No reserve deputy will be permitted to carry a concealed firearm while in an off-duty capacity, other than to and from work, except those reserve deputies who possess a valid CCW permit. An instance may arise where a reserve deputy is assigned to a plainclothes detail for his/her assigned tour of duty. Under these circumstances, the reserve deputy may be permitted to carry a weapon more suited to the assignment with the knowledge and approval of the supervisor in charge of the detail.

Any reserve deputy who is permitted to carry a firearm other than the assigned duty weapon may do so only after verifying that the weapon conforms to departmental standards. The weapon must be registered by the reserve deputy and be inspected and certified as fit for service by a departmental armorer.

Before being allowed to carry any optional firearm during an assigned tour of duty, the reserve deputy shall have demonstrated his/her proficiency with said weapon.

## *Reserve Deputies*

---

A reserve deputy may be issued a permit to carry a concealed weapon. The decision to issue a concealed weapon permit will be made by the Sheriff with input from the Reserve Program Coordinator and administrative staff. In issuing a concealed weapon permit a reserve deputy's qualification will be individually judged. A reserve deputy's dedication to the program and demonstrated maturity, among other factors, will be considered before a concealed weapon permit will be issued. Once issued, the concealed weapon permit will be valid only for as long as the reserve deputy remains in good standing as a Reserve Deputy with the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

### **350.6.3 RESERVE DEPUTY FIREARM TRAINING**

All reserve deputies are required to maintain proficiency with firearms used in the course of their assignments. Reserve deputies shall comply with all areas of the firearms training section of the Policy Manual, with the following exceptions:

- (a) All reserve deputies are required to qualify at least every other month
- (b) Reserve deputies may fire at the department approved range at least once each month and more often with the approval of the Reserve Coordinator
- (c) Should a reserve deputy fail to qualify over a two-month period, that reserve deputy will not be allowed to carry a firearm until he/she has reestablished his/her proficiency

### **350.7 EMERGENCY CALL-OUT FOR RESERVE PERSONNEL**

The Reserve Coordinator shall develop a plan outlining an emergency call-out procedure for reserve personnel.

## Outside Agency Assistance

### 352.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to members when requesting or responding to a request for mutual aid or when assisting another law enforcement agency.

### 352.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to promptly respond to requests for assistance by other law enforcement agencies, subject to available resources and consistent with the applicable laws and policies of this department.

### 352.3 ASSISTING OUTSIDE AGENCIES

Generally, requests for any type of assistance from another agency should be routed to the on duty patrol sergeant for approval. In some instances, a memorandum of understanding or other established protocol may exist that eliminates the need for approval of individual requests.

When another law enforcement agency requests assistance from this department, the on duty patrol sergeant may authorize, if available, an appropriate number of personnel to assist. Members are reminded that their actions when rendering assistance must conform with applicable laws and be consistent with the policies of this department.

Deputies may respond to a request for emergency assistance, however, they shall notify a supervisor of their activity as soon as practicable.

Arrestees may be temporarily detained by this department until arrangements for transportation are made by the outside agency. Probation violators who are temporarily detained by this department will not ordinarily be booked at this department. Only in exceptional circumstances, and subject to supervisor approval, will this department provide transportation of arrestees to other facilities on behalf of another agency.

When transportation assistance is rendered, a report shall be prepared and submitted by the handling member unless otherwise directed by a supervisor.

#### 352.3.1 INITIATED ACTIVITY

Any on-duty deputy who engages in law enforcement activities of any type that are not part of a mutual aid request and take place outside the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall notify his/her supervisor or the on duty patrol sergeant and Dispatch as soon as practicable. This requirement does not apply to special enforcement details or multi-agency units that regularly work in multiple jurisdictions.

### 352.4 REQUESTING OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE

If assistance is needed from another agency, the member requesting assistance should, if practicable, first notify a supervisor. The handling member or supervisor should direct assisting personnel to where they are needed and to whom they should report when they arrive.

## *Outside Agency Assistance*

---

The requesting member should arrange for appropriate radio communication capabilities, if necessary and available, so that communication can be coordinated between assisting personnel.

### **352.5 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

Incidents of outside assistance or law enforcement activities that are not documented in a crime report shall be documented in a general case report or as directed by the on duty patrol sergeant.

### **352.6 MANDATORY SHARING**

Equipment and supplies purchased with federal funds or grants that require such equipment and supplies be shared with other agencies should be documented and updated as necessary by the Operations Captain. The Operations Captain manages the California Counter Drug Equipment Procurement Program, State Homeland Security Grant Program and California Office of Emergency Services Law Enforcement Mutual Aid and SAR programs.

The documentation should include:

- (a) The conditions relative to sharing.
- (b) The training requirements for:
  - 1. The use of the supplies and equipment.
  - 2. The members trained in the use of the supplies and equipment.
- (c) Any other requirements for use of the equipment and supplies.

Copies of the documentation should be provided to Dispatch and the on duty patrol sergeant to ensure use of the equipment and supplies is in compliance with the applicable sharing agreements.

The Training Manager should maintain documentation that the appropriate members have received the required training.

## Registered Offender Information

### 356.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines by which the Merced County Sheriff's Office will address issues associated with certain offenders who are residing in the jurisdiction and how the [Department/Office] will disseminate information and respond to public inquiries for information about registered sex, arson and drug offenders.

### 356.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to identify and monitor registered offenders living within this jurisdiction and to take reasonable steps to address the risks those persons may pose.

### 356.3 REGISTRATION

The Supervised Release Team supervisor shall establish a process to reasonably accommodate registration of certain offenders. The process should rebut any allegation on the part of the offender that the registration process was too confusing, burdensome or difficult for compliance. If it is reasonable to do so, an investigator assigned to related investigations should conduct the registration in order to best evaluate any threat the person may pose to the community. Those assigned to register offenders should receive appropriate training regarding the registration process.

Upon conclusion of the registration process, the investigator shall ensure that the registration information is provided to the California Department of Justice (DOJ) in accordance with applicable law (Health and Safety Code § 11594; Penal Code § 457.1; Penal Code § 290 et seq.).

The refusal of a registrant to provide any of the required information or complete the process should initiate a criminal investigation for failure to register.

#### 356.3.1 CONTENTS OF REGISTRATION

The information collected from the registering offenders shall include a signed statement as required by the California DOJ, fingerprints and a photograph and any other information required by applicable law (Health and Safety Code § 11594; Penal Code § 457.1; Penal Code § 290 et seq.).

### 356.4 MONITORING OF REGISTERED OFFENDERS

The Supervised Release Team Supervisor should establish a system to periodically, and at least once annually, verify that a registrant remains in compliance with his/her registration requirements after the initial registration. This verification should include:

- (a) Efforts to confirm residence using an unobtrusive method, such as an Internet search or drive-by of the declared residence.
- (b) Review of information on the California DOJ website for sex offenders.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Registered Offender Information*

---

- (c) Contact with a registrant's parole or probation officer.

Any discrepancies should be reported to the California DOJ.

The Detective Unit Supervisor should also establish a procedure to routinely disseminate information regarding registered offenders to Merced County Sheriff's Office personnel, including timely updates regarding new or relocated registrants.

### **356.5 DISSEMINATION OF PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Members will not unilaterally make a public notification advising the community of a particular registrant's presence in the community. Members who identify a significant risk or other public safety issue associated with a registrant should promptly advise their supervisor. The supervisor should evaluate the request and forward the information to the Sheriff if warranted. A determination will be made by the Sheriff, with the assistance of legal counsel as necessary, whether such a public alert should be made.

Members of the public requesting information on sex registrants should be provided the Megan's Law website or the Merced County Sheriff's Office's website. Information on sex registrants placed on the Merced County Sheriff's Office's website shall comply with the requirements of Penal Code § 290.46.

The Records Supervisor may release local registered offender information to residents only in accordance with applicable law (Penal Code § 290.45; Penal Code § 290.46; Penal Code § 457.1; Health and Safety Code § 11594), and in compliance with a California Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250-6276.48) request.

#### **356.5.1 LIMITED RELEASE WITHIN COLLEGE CAMPUS COMMUNITY**

California law allows the following additional information regarding a registered sex offender on campus, whose information is not available to the public via the internet website, to be released to a campus community (Penal Code § 290.01(d)):

- (a) The offender's full name
- (b) The offender's known aliases
- (c) The offender's sex
- (d) The offender's race
- (e) The offender's physical description
- (f) The offender's photograph
- (g) The offender's date of birth
- (h) Crimes resulting in the registration of the offender under Penal Code § 290
- (i) The date of last registration

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Registered Offender Information*

---

For purposes of this section, campus community shall be defined as those persons present at or regularly frequenting any place constituting campus property, satellite facilities, laboratories, public areas contiguous to the campus and other areas set forth in Penal Code § 290.01(d).

### 356.5.2 RELEASE NOTIFICATIONS

Registrant information that is released should include notification that:

- (a) The offender registry includes only those persons who have been required by law to register and who are in compliance with the offender registration laws.
- (b) The information is provided as a public service and may not be current or accurate.
- (c) Persons should not rely solely on the offender registry as a safeguard against offenses in their communities.
- (d) The crime for which a person is convicted may not accurately reflect the level of risk.
- (e) Anyone who uses information contained in the registry to harass registrants or commit any crime may be subject to criminal prosecution.
- (f) The purpose of the release of information is to allow members of the public to protect themselves and their children from sex offenders (Penal Code 290.45).

# Major Incident Notification

## 358.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Incidents that are of significant nature and that fall into listed criteria require notification to certain members of this department. It is critical that staff members are informed of certain incidents in order to apprise their superiors and properly address inquiries from members of the press.

## 358.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes that certain incidents should be brought to the attention of supervisors or other specified personnel of this department to facilitate the coordination of activities and ensure that inquiries from the media and the public may be properly addressed.

## 358.3 MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR NOTIFICATION

Most situations where the media show a strong interest are also of interest to the Sheriff and the Sheriff's Administration. The following examples are provided as a guide for notification and are not intended to be all inclusive:

- Homicides or other violent assaults
- Serious crimes associated with criminal street gangs
- Traffic accidents with fatalities
- Officer involved shooting on or off duty (See Policy Manual § 310.4.3 for special notifications)
- Significant injury or death of a department employee, whether on or off duty
- Death of a Merced County Sheriff's Department employee (retired or active duty)
- Death of prominent community member
- Arrest or law enforcement contact of department employee or sworn member of an allied agency
- Aircraft crash with major damage and/or injury or death
- In-custody deaths
- Life threatening or fatal industrial accidents
- Any pursuit
- Any other event or situation in which the Sheriff would likely be interested

## *Major Incident Notification*

---

### **358.4 FIELD SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

The field supervisor is responsible for initiating the appropriate notifications. The supervisor shall make reasonable attempts to obtain as much information on the incident as possible before notification. The field supervisor shall attempt to make notification as soon as practical. Notification shall be made by via email using the supervisor's department issued personal communication device. After the email notification has been sent, it shall be the supervisor's responsibility to make a follow up phone call to the Sheriff's cell phone. In cases where the there is no answer, a detailed message will be left for the Sheriff. In the absence of a supervisor, the designated officer in charge shall be responsible to make administrative notification and subsequent phone call. The officer in charge shall request dispatch to email the information.

#### **358.4.1 STAFF NOTIFICATION**

In the event an incident occurs described in Policy Manual § 358.3, the Sheriff, Undersheriff, all Captains, all Lieutenants, Director of Administrative Services, Detective Sergeant, and the Public Information Officer shall be notified by email.

#### **358.4.2 DETECTIVE NOTIFICATION**

If the field supervisor determines an incident requires that a detective responds after hours, the immediate supervisor of the detective unit shall be contacted who will then contact the appropriate detective.

#### **358.4.3 TRAFFIC INCIDENT NOTIFICATION**

In the event of a traffic fatality or major injury, the Sheriff and administration shall be notified via email using the supervisor's department issued personal communication device.

#### **358.4.4 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER (PIO)**

The Public Information Officer shall be called after members of staff have been notified that it appears the media may have a significant interest in the incident.

# Death Investigation

## 360.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The investigations of cases involving death include those ranging from natural cause to homicide. Some causes of death may not be readily apparent and some cases differ substantially from what they appeared to be initially. The thoroughness of death investigations cannot be emphasized enough.

## 360.2 INVESTIGATION CONSIDERATIONS

Death investigation cases require certain actions be taken. Paramedics shall be called in all suspected death cases unless the death is obvious (decapitated, decomposed, etc.). A supervisor shall be notified in all death investigations.

### 360.2.1 CORONER REQUEST

Government Code § 27491 and Health & Safety Code § 102850 direct the Coroner to inquire into and determine the circumstances, manner and cause of certain deaths. The Coroner shall be called in any of the following cases:

- (a) Unattended deaths (No physician in attendance or during the continued absence of the attending physician. Also, includes all deaths outside hospitals and nursing care facilities).
- (b) Deaths where the deceased has not been attended by either a physician or a registered nurse, who is a member of a hospice care interdisciplinary team, as defined by Health and Safety Code § 1746 in the 20 days prior to death.
- (c) Physician unable to state the cause of death. Unwillingness does not apply. Includes all sudden, unexpected and unusual deaths and fetal deaths when the underlying cause is unknown.
- (d) Known or suspected homicide.
- (e) Known or suspected suicide.
- (f) Involving any criminal action or suspicion of a criminal act. Includes child and dependent adult negligence and abuse.
- (g) Related to or following known or suspected self-induced or criminal abortion.
- (h) Associated with a known or alleged rape or crime against nature.
- (i) Following an accident or injury (primary or contributory). Deaths known or suspected as resulting (in whole or in part) from or related to accident or injury, either old or recent.
- (j) Drowning, fire, hanging, gunshot, stabbing, cutting, starvation, exposure, alcoholism, drug addiction, strangulation or aspiration.
- (k) Accidental poisoning (food, chemical, drug, therapeutic agents).

## *Death Investigation*

---

- (l) Occupational diseases or occupational hazards.
- (m) Known or suspected contagious disease and constituting a public hazard.
- (n) All deaths in operating rooms and all deaths where a patient has not fully recovered from an anesthetic, whether in surgery, recovery room or elsewhere.
- (o) In prison or while under sentence. Includes all in-custody and sheriff's involved deaths.
- (p) All deaths of unidentified persons.
- (q) All deaths of state hospital patients.
- (r) Suspected Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) deaths.
- (s) All deaths where the patient is comatose throughout the period of the physician's attendance. Includes patients admitted to hospitals unresponsive and expire without regaining consciousness.

The body shall not be disturbed or moved from the position or place of death without permission of the coroner.

### 360.2.2 SEARCHING DEAD BODIES

The Coroner or Deputy Coroner is generally the only person permitted to search a body known to be dead from any of the circumstances set forth in Government Code § 27491. The only exception is that a deputy is permitted to search the body of a person killed in a traffic collision for the limited purpose of locating an anatomical donor card (Government Code § 27491.3). If such a donor card is located, the Coroner or a designee shall be promptly notified. Should circumstances indicate to a deputy that any search of a known dead body is warranted prior to the arrival of the Coroner or a designee; the investigating deputy shall first obtain verbal consent from the Coroner or a designee.

Whenever possible, a witness, preferably a relative to the deceased or a member of the household, should be requested to remain at the scene with the deputy pending the arrival of the Coroner or a designee. The name and address of this person shall be included in the narrative of the death report. Whenever personal effects are removed from the body of the deceased by the Coroner or a designee, a receipt shall be obtained. This receipt shall be attached to the death report.

### 360.2.3 DEATH NOTIFICATION

When practical, and if not handled by the Coroner's Division, notification to the next-of-kin of the deceased person shall be made, in person, by the deputy assigned to the incident and the deputy shall notify the Coroner's Division of the notification. If the next-of-kin lives in another jurisdiction, a law enforcement official from that jurisdiction shall be requested to make the personal notification. If the relatives live outside this county, the Coroner's Division may be requested to make the notification. Assigned detectives may need to talk to the next-of-kin.

### 360.2.4 UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODIES

If the identity of a dead body cannot be established after the Coroner arrives, the Coroner's office will issue a "John Doe" or "Jane Doe" number for the report.

## *Death Investigation*

---

### 360.2.5 DEATH INVESTIGATION REPORTING

The duty detective or detective sergeant shall be notified in the following type of death cases:

(a) Known or suspected Homicide (b) Known or suspect Suicide (c) Any unattended death with no medical history or complications (d) In-Custody Deaths (e) Industrial Accidents (f) Suspected Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (g) Drowning (h) Train Accident (i) Aircraft Accident (j) Industrial Accident (k) Accidental Death of any kind A report shall be prepared by the responding deputy or on-call detective.

### 360.2.6 SUSPECTED HOMICIDE

If the initially assigned deputy suspects that the death involves a homicide or other suspicious circumstances, the Investigations Division shall be notified to determine the possible need for a detective to respond to the scene for further immediate investigation.

All homicide or suspected homicide investigations shall be conducted only by full-time Deputy Coroners. Transportation of the victims to the Coroner's facility shall likewise be the responsibility of a full-time Deputy Coroner. A contract provider may be used for transportation as long as the Deputy Coroner maintains chain of evidence.

Coroner Division personnel shall store the decedent in the "decomp" refrigerator and the latch shall be secured with and individually numbered seal. The seal number shall be recorded on the "Coroner's Chain of Custody-Decedent" form and all entries into the refrigerator shall be logged with notation indicating the number of the seal broken and, if appropriate, the number of the replacement seal.

As always, if a Deputy Sheriff has any reason to believe that a coroner's case is not addressed by statute or regulation, they should contact their supervisor and also contact the on-call Deputy Coroner immediately.

### 360.2.7 EMPLOYMENT RELATED DEATHS OR INJURIES

Any member of this agency who responds to and determines that a death, serious illness, or serious injury has occurred as a result of an accident at or in connection with the victim's employment shall ensure that the nearest office of Cal-OSHA is notified by telephone or teletype with all pertinent information as soon as practical. (8 CCR 342(b)).

# Identity Theft

## 362.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Identity theft is a growing trend that frequently involves related crimes in multiple jurisdictions. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for the reporting and investigation of such crimes.

## 362.2 REPORTING

- (a) Identity Theft (Penal Code § 530.5) is a location specific suspect/victim based crime. At the time a victim reports identity theft, it is often unknown where the crime actually occurred. Therefore, in accordance with Penal Code § 530.6, when the victim of an identity theft resides within the jurisdiction of this department, deputies shall initiate a report on behalf of the victim regardless of jurisdiction where the crime occurred. Further, deputies shall adhere to the following:
  - 1. For any victim not residing within this department's jurisdiction and it is known that the crime of identity theft occurred within this jurisdiction, deputies shall initiate a report on behalf of the victim.
  - 2. For any victim not residing within this department's jurisdiction and it is unknown where the crime of identity theft occurred, deputies may initiate a report on behalf of the victim to be forwarded to the law enforcement agency which has jurisdiction in the victim's area of residence. Otherwise, the victim should be encouraged to promptly report the identity theft to the law enforcement agency which has jurisdiction in the victim's area of residence.
  - 3. For any victim not residing within this department's jurisdiction and it is known that the crime of identity theft occurred in another known jurisdiction, deputies should inform the victim to initiate a report with the law enforcement agency which has jurisdiction in the victim's area of residence and/or the jurisdiction where the crime occurred. Further, if practical, the deputy should provide the victim with the contact information of that law enforcement agency of jurisdiction where the crime occurred.
- (b) While the crime of identity theft should be reported to the law enforcement agency where the victim resides, deputies of this department should investigate and report crimes occurring within this jurisdiction which have resulted from the original identity theft (e.g., the identity theft occurred elsewhere, but the credit card fraud occurred and is reported in this jurisdiction).
- (c) Deputies should include all known incidents of fraudulent activity (e.g., credit card number applied for in victim's name when the victim has never made such an application).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Identity Theft*

---

- (d) Deputies should also cross-reference all known reports made by the victim (e.g., U.S. Secret Service, credit reporting bureaus, U.S. Postal Service and DMV) with all known report numbers.
- (e) The reporting deputy should inform victims of identity theft that the California Identity Theft Registry is available to help those who are wrongly linked to crimes. The registry can be checked by law enforcement and other authorized persons to investigate whether a criminal history or want was created in the victim's name (Penal Code § 530.7). Information regarding the California Identity Theft Registry can be obtained by calling toll free (888) 880-0240.
- (f) Following supervisory review and departmental processing, the initial report should be forwarded to the appropriate detective for follow up investigation, coordination with other agencies and prosecution as circumstances dictate.

## Private Persons Arrests

### 364.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the handling of private person's arrests made pursuant to Penal Code § 837.

### 364.2 ADVISING PRIVATE PERSONS OF THE ARREST PROCESS

Penal Code § 836(b) expressly mandates that all deputies shall advise victims of domestic violence of the right to make a private person's arrest, including advice on how to safely execute such an arrest. In all other situations, deputies should use sound discretion in determining whether or not to advise an individual of the arrest process.

- (a) When advising any individual regarding the right to make a private person's arrest, deputies should refrain from encouraging or dissuading any individual from making such an arrest and should instead limit advice to the legal requirements for such an arrest as listed below.
- (b) Private individuals should be discouraged from using force to effect a private person's arrest, and absent immediate threat to their own safety or the safety of others, private individuals should be encouraged to refer matters to law enforcement officials for further investigation or arrest.

### 364.3 ARRESTS BY PRIVATE PERSONS

Penal Code § 837 provides that a private person may arrest another:

- (a) For a public offense committed or attempted in his or her presence;
- (b) When the person arrested has committed a felony, although not in his or her presence;
- (c) When a felony has been in fact committed, and he or she has reasonable cause for believing the person arrested has committed it.

Unlike peace officers, private persons may not make an arrest on suspicion that a felony has been committed - the felony must in fact have taken place.

### 364.4 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Any deputy presented with a private person wishing to make an arrest must determine whether or not there is reasonable cause to believe that such an arrest would be lawful (Penal Code § 847).

- (a) Should any deputy determine that there is no reasonable cause to believe that a private person's arrest is lawful, the deputy should take no action to further detain or restrain the individual beyond that which reasonably appears necessary to investigate the matter, determine the lawfulness of the arrest and protect the public safety.
  - 1. Any deputy who determines that a private person's arrest appears to be unlawful should promptly release the arrested individual pursuant to Penal Code § 849(b)

## *Private Persons Arrests*

---

- (1). The deputy must include the basis of such a determination in a related report.
2. Absent reasonable cause to support a private person's arrest or other lawful grounds to support an independent arrest by the deputy, the deputy should advise the parties that no arrest will be made and that the circumstances will be documented in a related report.
- (b) Whenever a deputy determines that there is reasonable cause to believe that a private person's arrest is lawful, the deputy may exercise any of the following options:
  1. Take the individual into physical custody for booking
  2. Release the individual pursuant to a Notice to Appear
  3. Release the individual pursuant to Penal Code § 849

### **364.5 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

In all circumstances in which a private person is claiming to have made an arrest, the individual must complete and sign a department Private Person's Arrest form under penalty of perjury.

In addition to the Private Person's Arrest Form (and any other related documents such as citations, booking forms, etc.), deputies shall complete a narrative report regarding the circumstances and disposition of the incident.

# Willful Disobedience of a Court Order

## 365.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended to provide citizens of Merced County the opportunity to report alleged willful disobedience of a Court Order.

## 365.2 REPORTING

- (a) The self-reporting format will be required if there has been willful disobedience of a court order (Penal Code § 166.4). This report can be made and placed within the Records Department of the Merced County Sheriff's Office and held for "informational purposes" or can be forwarded to the Merced County District Attorney's Office for prosecution at their discretion.
- (b) The self-reporting format is self explanatory. A citizen wishing to make a report shall be provided a self-reporting package. The self-reporting package can be obtained by coming to the Merced County Sheriff's Office or nearest Sub-Station or by downloading it from the Merced County Sheriff's web site at [www.mercedsheriff.com](http://www.mercedsheriff.com). The package will contain report explanations and a blank report form. They will be instructed to complete the form as per the attached instructions and return it to the Merced County sheriff's Office or nearest Sub-Station during normal business hours.
- (c) The Sheriff's Community Service Technician (CST) or dispatcher receiving the request from a citizen wishing to make a report shall evaluate the circumstances of the offense intended to be reported to determine whether or not a crime, other than willful disobedience of a court order, has been committed. In cases where crimes such as child stealing/concealment or violations of domestic violence restraining order are suspected, a deputy will be dispatched to take the report and will conduct and appropriate investigation.
- (d) These reports will be accepted by a CST during normal business hours. At the time of receipt of these reports, the CST shall contact the Sheriff's Dispatch Center, obtain a case number, date and time for the report and apply this information to the report. These reports should also be reviewed to ensure all areas have been completed properly. In addition, a copy of the current court order shall be attached. Once the report has been accepted, they shall be forwarded to the Patrol Sergeant for approval.
- (e) When requested by a CST, the Merced County Sheriff's Department Dispatch Center will create a card and classify it as a "PC166.4" card closure. This will give the Sheriff's Office the ability to track these cases through the Sheriff's CAD system.
- (f) The Patrol Sergeant shall, in a timely manner, review these reports to ensure no additional crimes have been committed requiring immediate attention by law enforcement. Once the reports have been approved, they will be forwarded to the Sheriff's Record Division. If the reporting party is requesting prosecution, the Records

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Willful Disobedience of a Court Order*

---

Division shall forward a copy of the report to the Merced County District Attorney's office.

# Anti-Reproductive Rights Crimes Reporting

## 366.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy shall establish a procedure for the mandated reporting of Anti-Reproductive Rights Crimes (ARRC) to the Attorney General pursuant to the Reproductive Rights Law Enforcement Act (Penal Code § 13775 et seq.).

## 366.2 DEFINITIONS

Penal Code § 423.2 provides that the following acts shall be considered Anti-Reproductive Rights Crimes (ARRC) when committed by any person, except a parent or guardian acting towards his or her minor child or ward:

- (a) By force, threat of force, or physical obstruction that is a crime of violence, intentionally injures, intimidates, interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with any person or entity because that person or entity is a reproductive health services client, provider, or assistant, or in order to intimidate any person or entity, or any class of persons or entities, from becoming or remaining a reproductive health services client, provider, or assistant
- (b) By non-violent physical obstruction, intentionally injures, intimidates, or interferes with, or attempts to injure, intimidate, or interfere with, any person or entity because that person or entity is a reproductive health services client, provider, or assistant, or in order to intimidate any person or entity, or any class of persons or entities, from becoming or remaining a reproductive health services client, provider or assistant
- (c) Intentionally damages or destroys the property of a person, entity, or facility, or attempts to do so, because the person, entity, or facility is a reproductive health services client, provider, assistant, or facility

## 366.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS TO THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

- (a) Upon the receipt of the report of an ARRC, it shall be the responsibility of the employee taking such a report to also complete an ARRC Data Collection Worksheet (BCIA 8371) in accordance with the instructions contained on such forms.
- (b) The ARRC Data Collection Worksheet shall be processed with all related reports and forwarded to the Records Supervisor.
- (c) By the tenth day of each month, it shall be the responsibility of the Records Supervisor to ensure that a Summary Worksheet (BCIA 8370) is submitted to the Department of Justice Criminal Justice Statistics Center.
  - 1. In the event that no ARRC(s) were reported during the previous month, a Summary Worksheet shall be submitted to Department of Justice with an indication that no such crimes were reported.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Anti-Reproductive Rights Crimes Reporting*

---

2. Any ARRC(s) reported in the Summary Worksheet shall be accompanied by a copy of the related Data Collection Worksheet(s).

## Limited English Proficiency Services

### 368.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to members when communicating with individuals with limited English proficiency (LEP) (42 USC § 2000d).

#### 368.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Authorized interpreter** - A person who has been screened and authorized by the Department to act as an interpreter and/or translator for others.

**Interpret or interpretation** - The act of listening to a communication in one language (source language) and orally converting it to another language (target language), while retaining the same meaning.

**Limited English proficient (LEP)** - Any individual whose primary language is not English and who has a limited ability to read, write, speak or understand English. These individuals may be competent in certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding) but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing). Similarly, LEP designations are context-specific; an individual may possess sufficient English language skills to function in one setting but these skills may be insufficient in other situations.

**Qualified bilingual member** - A member of the Merced County Sheriff's Office, designated by the Department, who has the ability to communicate fluently, directly and accurately in both English and another language. Bilingual members may be fluent enough to communicate in a non-English language but may not be sufficiently fluent to interpret or translate from one language into another.

**Translate or translation** - The replacement of written text from one language (source language) into an equivalent written text (target language).

### 368.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to reasonably ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to law enforcement services, programs and activities, while not imposing undue burdens on its members.

The Department will not discriminate against or deny any individual access to services, rights or programs based upon national origin or any other protected interest or right.

### 368.3 LEP COORDINATOR

The Sheriff shall delegate certain responsibilities to an LEP Coordinator. The LEP Coordinator shall be appointed by, and directly responsible to, the Operations Captain or the authorized designee.

The responsibilities of the LEP Coordinator include, but are not limited to:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

- (a) Coordinating and implementing all aspects of the Merced County Sheriff's Office's LEP services to LEP individuals.
- (b) Developing procedures that will enable members to access LEP services, including telephonic interpreters, and ensuring the procedures are available to all members.
- (c) Ensuring that a list of all qualified bilingual members and authorized interpreters is maintained and available to each patrol supervisor and the Dispatch Center Supervisor. The list should include information regarding the following:
  - 1. Languages spoken
  - 2. Contact information
  - 3. Availability
- (d) Ensuring signage stating that interpreters are available free of charge to LEP individuals is posted in appropriate areas and in the most commonly spoken languages.
- (e) Reviewing existing and newly developed documents to determine which are vital documents and should be translated, and into which languages the documents should be translated.
- (f) Annually assessing demographic data and other resources, including contracted language services utilization data and community-based organizations, to determine if there are additional documents or languages that are appropriate for translation.
- (g) Identifying standards and assessments to be used by the Department to qualify individuals as qualified bilingual members or authorized interpreters.
- (h) Periodically reviewing efforts of the Department in providing meaningful access to LEP individuals, and, as appropriate, developing reports, new procedures or recommending modifications to this policy.
- (i) Receiving and responding to complaints regarding department LEP services.
- (j) Ensuring appropriate processes are in place to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and inquiries regarding discrimination in access to department services, programs and activities.

### **368.4 FOUR-FACTOR ANALYSIS**

Since there are many different languages that members could encounter, the Department will utilize the four-factor analysis outlined in the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Guidance to Federal Financial Assistance Recipients, available at the DOJ website, to determine which measures will provide meaningful access to its services and programs. It is recognized that law enforcement contacts and circumstances will vary considerably. This analysis, therefore, must remain flexible and will require an ongoing balance of four factors, which are:

## *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

- (a) The number or proportion of LEP individuals eligible to be served or likely to be encountered by department members, or who may benefit from programs or services within the jurisdiction of the Department or a particular geographic area.
- (b) The frequency with which LEP individuals are likely to come in contact with department members, programs or services.
- (c) The nature and importance of the contact, program, information or service provided.
- (d) The cost of providing LEP assistance and the resources available.

### **368.5 TYPES OF LEP ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

Merced County Sheriff's Office members should never refuse service to an LEP individual who is requesting assistance, nor should they require an LEP individual to furnish an interpreter as a condition for receiving assistance. The Department will make every reasonable effort to provide meaningful and timely assistance to LEP individuals through a variety of services.

The Department will utilize all reasonably available tools, such as language identification cards, when attempting to determine an LEP individual's primary language.

LEP individuals may choose to accept department-provided LEP services at no cost or they may choose to provide their own.

Department-provided LEP services may include, but are not limited to, the assistance methods described in this policy.

### **368.6 WRITTEN FORMS AND GUIDELINES**

Vital documents or those that are frequently used should be translated into languages most likely to be encountered. The LEP Coordinator will arrange to make these translated documents available to members and other appropriate individuals, as necessary.

### **368.7 AUDIO RECORDINGS**

The Department may develop audio recordings of important or frequently requested information in a language most likely to be understood by those LEP individuals who are representative of the community being served.

### **368.8 QUALIFIED BILINGUAL MEMBERS**

Bilingual members may be qualified to provide LEP services when they have demonstrated through established department procedures a sufficient level of skill and competence to fluently communicate in both English and a non-English language. Members utilized for LEP services must demonstrate knowledge of the functions of an interpreter/translator and the ethical issues involved when acting as a language conduit. Additionally, bilingual members must be able to communicate technical and law enforcement terminology, and be sufficiently proficient in the non-English language to perform complicated tasks, such as conducting interrogations, taking statements, collecting evidence or conveying rights or responsibilities.

## *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

When a qualified bilingual member from this department is not available, personnel from other County departments, who have been identified by the Department as having the requisite skills and competence, may be requested.

### **368.9 AUTHORIZED INTERPRETERS**

Any person designated by the Department to act as an authorized interpreter and/or translator must have demonstrated competence in both English and the involved non-English language, must have an understanding of the functions of an interpreter that allows for correct and effective translation, and should not be a person with an interest in the department case or investigation involving the LEP individual. A person providing interpretation or translation services may be required to establish the accuracy and trustworthiness of the interpretation or translation in a court proceeding.

Authorized interpreters must pass a screening process established by the LEP Coordinator which demonstrates that their skills and abilities include:

- (a) The competence and ability to communicate information accurately in both English and in the target language.
- (b) Knowledge, in both languages, of any specialized terms or concepts peculiar to this department and of any particularized vocabulary or phraseology used by the LEP individual.
- (c) The ability to understand and adhere to the interpreter role without deviating into other roles, such as counselor or legal adviser.
- (d) Knowledge of the ethical issues involved when acting as a language conduit.

#### **368.9.1 SOURCES OF AUTHORIZED INTERPRETERS**

The Department may contract with authorized interpreters who are available over the telephone. Members may use these services with the approval of a supervisor and in compliance with established procedures.

Other sources may include:

- Qualified bilingual members of this department or personnel from other County departments.
- Individuals employed exclusively to perform interpretation services.
- Contracted in-person interpreters, such as state or federal court interpreters, among others.
- Interpreters from other agencies who have been qualified as interpreters by this department, and with whom the Department has a resource-sharing or other arrangement that they will interpret according to department guidelines.

## *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

### **368.9.2 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER SOURCES OF LANGUAGE ASSISTANCE**

Language assistance may be available from community volunteers who have demonstrated competence in either monolingual (direct) communication and/or in interpretation or translation (as noted in above), and have been approved by the Department to communicate with LEP individuals.

Where qualified bilingual members or other authorized interpreters are unavailable to assist, approved community volunteers who have demonstrated competence may be called upon when appropriate. However, department members must carefully consider the nature of the contact and the relationship between the LEP individual and the volunteer to ensure that the volunteer can provide neutral and unbiased assistance.

While family or friends of an LEP individual may offer to assist with communication or interpretation, members should carefully consider the circumstances before relying on such individuals. For example, children should not be relied upon except in exigent or very informal and non-confrontational situations.

### **368.10 CONTACT AND REPORTING**

While all law enforcement contacts, services and individual rights are important, this department will utilize the four-factor analysis to prioritize service to LEP individuals so that such services may be targeted where they are most needed, according to the nature and importance of the particular law enforcement activity involved.

Whenever any member of this department is required to complete a report or other documentation, and interpretation services are provided to any involved LEP individual, such services should be noted in the related report. Members should document the type of interpretation services utilized and whether the individual elected to use services provided by the Department or some other identified source.

### **368.11 RECEIVING AND RESPONDING TO REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will take reasonable steps and will work with the Department of Human Resources to develop in-house language capacity by hiring or appointing qualified members proficient in languages representative of the community being served.

#### **368.11.1 EMERGENCY CALLS TO 9-1-1**

Department members will make every reasonable effort to promptly accommodate LEP individuals utilizing 9-1-1 lines. When a 9-1-1 call-taker receives a call and determines that the caller is an LEP individual, the call-taker shall quickly determine whether sufficient information can be obtained to initiate an appropriate emergency response. If language assistance is still needed, the language is known and a qualified bilingual member is available in Dispatch, the call shall immediately be handled by the qualified bilingual member.

If a qualified bilingual member is not available or the call-taker is unable to identify the caller's language, the call-taker will contact the contracted telephone interpretation service and establish a three-way call between the call-taker, the LEP individual and the interpreter.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

Dispatchers will make every reasonable effort to dispatch a qualified bilingual member to the assignment, if available and appropriate.

While 9-1-1 calls shall receive top priority, reasonable efforts should also be made to accommodate LEP individuals seeking routine access to services and information by utilizing the resources listed in this policy.

#### **368.12 FIELD ENFORCEMENT**

Field enforcement will generally include such contacts as traffic stops, pedestrian stops, serving warrants and restraining orders, crowd/traffic control and other routine field contacts that may involve LEP individuals. The scope and nature of these activities and contacts will inevitably vary. Members and/or supervisors must assess each situation to determine the need and availability of language assistance to all involved LEP individuals and utilize the methods outlined in this policy to provide such assistance.

Although not every situation can be addressed in this policy, it is important that members are able to effectively communicate the reason for a contact, the need for information and the meaning or consequences of any enforcement action. For example, it would be meaningless to request consent to search if the deputy is unable to effectively communicate with an LEP individual.

If available, deputies should obtain the assistance of a qualified bilingual member or an authorized interpreter before placing an LEP individual under arrest.

#### **368.13 INVESTIGATIVE FIELD INTERVIEWS**

In any situation where an interview may reveal information that could be used as the basis for arrest or prosecution of an LEP individual and a qualified bilingual member is unavailable or lacks the skills to directly communicate with the LEP individual, an authorized interpreter should be used. This includes interviews conducted during an investigation with victims, witnesses and suspects. In such situations, audio recordings of the interviews should be made when reasonably possible. Identification and contact information for the interpreter (e.g., name, address) should be documented so that the person can be subpoenaed for trial if necessary.

If an authorized interpreter is needed, deputies should consider calling for an authorized interpreter in the following order:

- An authorized department member or allied agency interpreter
- An authorized telephone interpreter
- Any other authorized interpreter

Any *Miranda* warnings shall be provided to suspects in their primary language by an authorized interpreter or, if the suspect is literate, by providing a translated *Miranda* warning card.

The use of an LEP individual's bilingual friends, family members, children, neighbors or bystanders may be used only when a qualified bilingual member or authorized interpreter is unavailable and there is an immediate need to interview an LEP individual.

## *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

### **368.14 CUSTODIAL INTERROGATIONS**

Miscommunication during custodial interrogations may have a substantial impact on the evidence presented in a criminal prosecution. Only qualified bilingual members or, if none is available or appropriate, authorized interpreters shall be used during custodial interrogations. *Miranda* warnings shall be provided to suspects in their primary language by the qualified bilingual member or an authorized interpreter.

In order to ensure that translations during custodial interrogations are accurately documented and are admissible as evidence, interrogations should be recorded whenever reasonably possible. See guidance on recording custodial interrogations in the Investigation and Prosecution Policy.

### **368.15 BOOKINGS**

When gathering information during the booking process, members should remain alert to the impediments that language barriers can create. In the interest of the arrestee's health and welfare, the safety and security of the facility, and to protect individual rights, it is important that accurate medical screening and booking information be obtained. Members should seek the assistance of a qualified bilingual member whenever there is concern that accurate information cannot be obtained or that booking instructions may not be properly understood by an LEP individual.

### **368.16 COMPLAINTS**

The Department shall ensure that LEP individuals who wish to file a complaint regarding members of this department are able to do so. The Department may provide an authorized interpreter or translated forms, as appropriate. Complaints will be referred to the LEP Coordinator.

Investigations into such complaints shall be handled in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy. Authorized interpreters used for any interview with an LEP individual during an investigation should not be members of this department.

Any notice required to be sent to an LEP individual as a complaining party pursuant to the Personnel Complaints Policy should be translated or otherwise communicated in a language-accessible manner.

### **368.17 COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Community outreach programs and other such services offered by this department are important to the ultimate success of more traditional law enforcement duties. This department will continue to work with community groups, local businesses and neighborhoods to provide equal access to such programs and services.

### **368.18 TRAINING**

To ensure that all members who may have contact with LEP individuals are properly trained, the Department will provide periodic training on this policy and related procedures, including how to access department-authorized telephonic and in-person interpreters and other available resources.

## *Limited English Proficiency Services*

---

The Training Manager shall be responsible for ensuring new members receive LEP training. Those who may have contact with LEP individuals should receive refresher training at least once every two years thereafter. The Training Manager shall maintain records of all LEP training provided, and will retain a copy in each member's training file in accordance with established records retention schedules.

### 368.18.1 TRAINING FOR AUTHORIZED INTERPRETERS

All members on the authorized interpreter list must successfully complete prescribed interpreter training. To complete interpreter training successfully, an interpreter must demonstrate proficiency in and ability to communicate information accurately in both English and in the target language, demonstrate knowledge in both languages of any specialized terms or phraseology, and understand and adhere to the interpreter role without deviating into other roles, such as counselor or legal adviser.

Members on the authorized interpreter list must receive refresher training annually or they will be removed from the authorized interpreter list. This annual training should include language skills competency (including specialized terminology) and ethical considerations.

The Training Manager shall be responsible for coordinating the annual refresher training and will maintain a record of all training the interpreters have received.

# Communications with Persons with Disabilities

## 370.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to members when communicating with individuals with disabilities, including those who are deaf or hard of hearing, have impaired speech or vision, or are blind.

### 370.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Auxiliary aids** - Tools used to communicate with people who have a disability or impairment. They include, but are not limited to, the use of gestures or visual aids to supplement oral communication; a notepad and pen or pencil to exchange written notes; a computer or typewriter; an assistive listening system or device to amplify sound; a teletypewriter (TTY) or videophones (video relay service or VRS); taped text; qualified readers; or a qualified interpreter.

**Disability or impairment** - A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, including hearing or seeing, regardless of whether the disabled person uses assistive or adaptive devices or auxiliary aids. Individuals who wear ordinary eyeglasses or contact lenses are not considered to have a disability (42 USC § 12102).

**Qualified interpreter** - A person who is able to interpret effectively, accurately and impartially, both receptively and expressively, using any necessary specialized vocabulary. Qualified interpreters include oral interpreters, translators, sign language interpreters and intermediary interpreters.

## 370.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to reasonably ensure that people with disabilities, including victims, witnesses, suspects and arrestees have equal access to law enforcement services, programs and activities. Members must make efforts to communicate effectively with individuals with disabilities.

The Department will not discriminate against or deny any individual access to services, rights or programs based upon disabilities.

## 370.3 AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES (ADA) COORDINATOR

The Sheriff shall delegate certain responsibilities to an ADA Coordinator (28 CFR 35.107). The ADA Coordinator shall be appointed and hold the rank of Lieutenant.

The responsibilities of the ADA Coordinator shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Working with the County ADA coordinator regarding the Merced County Sheriff's Office's efforts to ensure equal access to services, programs and activities.
- (b) Developing reports, new procedures, or recommending modifications to this policy.
- (c) Acting as a liaison with local disability advocacy groups or other disability groups regarding access to department services, programs and activities.

## *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

- (d) Ensuring that a list of qualified interpreter services is maintained and available to each Communications Supervisor. The list should include information regarding the following:
  - 1. Contact information
  - 2. Availability
- (e) Developing procedures that will enable members to access auxiliary aids or services, including qualified interpreters, and ensure the procedures are available to all members.
- (f) Ensuring signage is posted in appropriate areas, indicating that auxiliary aids are available free of charge to people with disabilities.
- (g) Ensuring appropriate processes are in place to provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints and inquiries regarding discrimination in access to department services, programs and activities.

### **370.4 FACTORS TO CONSIDER**

Because the nature of any law enforcement contact may vary substantially from one situation to the next, members of this department should consider all information reasonably available to them when determining how to communicate with an individual with a disability. Members should carefully balance all known factors in an effort to reasonably ensure people who are disabled have equal access to services, programs and activities. These factors may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Members should not always assume that effective communication is being achieved. The fact that an individual appears to be nodding in agreement does not always mean he/she completely understands the message. When there is any doubt, members should ask the individual to communicate back or otherwise demonstrate their understanding.
- (b) The nature of the disability (e.g., deafness or blindness vs. hard of hearing or low vision).
- (c) The nature of the law enforcement contact (e.g., emergency vs. non-emergency, custodial vs. consensual contact).
- (d) The availability of auxiliary aids. The fact that a particular aid is not available does not eliminate the obligation to reasonably ensure access. However, in an emergency, availability may factor into the type of aid used.

### **370.5 INITIAL AND IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATIONS**

Recognizing that various law enforcement encounters may be potentially volatile and/or emotionally charged, members should remain alert to the possibility of communication problems.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

Members should exercise special care in the use of all gestures, and verbal and written communication to minimize initial confusion and misunderstanding when dealing with any individual with known or suspected disabilities.

In a non-emergency situation, when a member knows or suspects an individual requires assistance to effectively communicate, the member shall identify the individual's choice of auxiliary aid or service.

The individual's preferred communication method must be honored unless another effective method of communication exists under the circumstances (28 CFR 35.160).

Factors to consider when determining whether an alternative method is effective include:

- (a) The methods of communication usually used by the individual.
- (b) The nature, length and complexity of the communication involved.
- (c) The context of the communication.

In emergency situations involving an imminent threat to the safety or welfare of any person, members may use whatever auxiliary aids and services that reasonably appear effective under the circumstances. This may include, for example, exchanging written notes or using the services of a person who knows sign language but is not a qualified interpreter, even if the person who is deaf or hard of hearing would prefer a qualified sign language interpreter or another appropriate auxiliary aid or service. Once the emergency has ended, the continued method of communication should be reconsidered. The member should inquire as to the individual's preference and give primary consideration to that preference.

If an individual who is deaf, hard of hearing or has impaired speech must be handcuffed while in the custody of the Merced County Sheriff's Office, consideration should be given, safety permitting, to placing the handcuffs in the front of the body to facilitate communication using sign language or writing.

#### **370.6 TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

Merced County Sheriff's Office members shall never refuse to assist an individual with disabilities who is requesting assistance. The Department will not charge anyone to receive auxiliary aids, nor shall they require anyone to furnish their own auxiliary aid or service as a condition for receiving assistance. The Department will make every reasonable effort to provide equal access and timely assistance to individuals who are disabled through a variety of services.

A person who is disabled may choose to accept department-provided auxiliary aids or services or they may choose to provide their own.

Department-provided auxiliary aids or services may include, but are not limited to, the assistance methods described in this policy.

## *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

### **370.7 AUDIO RECORDINGS AND ENLARGED PRINT**

The Department may develop audio recordings to assist people who are blind or have a visual impairment with accessing important information. If such a recording is not available, members may read aloud from the appropriate form, for example a personnel complaint form, or provide forms with enlarged print.

### **370.8 QUALIFIED INTERPRETERS**

A qualified interpreter may be needed in lengthy or complex transactions (e.g., interviewing a victim, witness, suspect or arrestee), if the individual to be interviewed normally relies on sign language or speechreading (lip-reading) to understand what others are saying. The qualified interpreter should not be a person with an interest in the case or investigation involving the disabled individual. A person providing interpretation services may be required to establish the accuracy and trustworthiness of the interpretation in a court proceeding.

Qualified interpreters should be:

- (a) Available within a reasonable amount of time but in no event longer than one hour if requested.
- (b) Experienced in providing interpretation services related to law enforcement matters.
- (c) Familiar with the use of VRS and/or video remote interpreting services.
- (d) Certified in either American Sign Language (ASL) or Signed English (SE).
- (e) Able to understand and adhere to the interpreter role without deviating into other roles, such as counselor or legal adviser.
- (f) Knowledgeable of the ethical issues involved when providing interpreter services.

Members should use department-approved procedures to request a qualified interpreter at the earliest reasonable opportunity, and generally not more than 15 minutes after a request for an interpreter has been made or it is reasonably apparent that an interpreter is needed. No individual who is disabled shall be required to provide his/her own interpreter (28 CFR 35.160).

### **370.9 TTY AND RELAY SERVICES**

In situations where an individual without a disability would have access to a telephone (e.g., booking or attorney contacts), members must also provide those who are deaf, hard of hearing or have impaired speech the opportunity to place calls using an available TTY (also known as a telecommunications device for deaf people, or TDD). Members shall provide additional time, as needed, for effective communication due to the slower nature of TTY and TDD communications.

The Department will accept all TTY or TDD calls placed by those who are deaf or hard of hearing and received via a telecommunications relay service (28 CFR 35.162).

Note that relay services translate verbatim, so the conversation must be conducted as if speaking directly to the caller.

## *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

### **370.10 COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS**

Interpreter services may be available from community volunteers who have demonstrated competence in communication services, such as ASL or SE, and have been approved by the Department to provide interpreter services.

Where qualified interpreters are unavailable to assist, approved community volunteers who have demonstrated competence may be called upon when appropriate. However, department members must carefully consider the nature of the contact and the relationship between the individual with the disability and the volunteer to ensure that the volunteer can provide neutral and unbiased assistance.

### **370.11 FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

While family or friends may offer to assist with interpretation, members should carefully consider the circumstances before relying on such individuals. The nature of the contact and relationship between the individual with the disability and the person offering services must be carefully considered (e.g., victim/suspect).

Children shall not be relied upon except in emergency or critical situations when there is no qualified interpreter reasonably available.

Adults may be relied upon when (28 CFR 35.160):

- (a) There is an emergency or critical situation and there is no qualified interpreter reasonably available.
- (b) The person with the disability requests that the adult interpret or facilitate communication and the adult agrees to provide such assistance, and reliance on that adult for such assistance is reasonable under the circumstances.

### **370.12 REPORTING**

Whenever any member of this department is required to complete a report or other documentation, and communication assistance has been provided, such services should be noted in the related report. Members should document the type of communication services utilized and whether the individual elected to use services provided by the Department or some other identified source. If the individual's express preference is not honored, the member must document why another method of communication was used.

All written communications exchanged in a criminal case shall be attached to the report or placed into evidence.

### **370.13 FIELD ENFORCEMENT**

Field enforcement will generally include such contacts as traffic stops, pedestrian stops, serving warrants and restraining orders, crowd/traffic control and other routine field contacts that may involve individuals with disabilities. The scope and nature of these activities and contacts will inevitably vary.

## *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

The Department recognizes that it would be virtually impossible to provide immediate access to complete communication services to every member of this department. Members and/or supervisors must assess each situation and consider the length, complexity and importance of the communication, as well as the individual's preferred method of communication, when determining the type of resources to use and whether a qualified interpreter is needed.

Although not every situation can be addressed in this policy, it is important that members are able to effectively communicate the reason for a contact, the need for information and the meaning or consequences of any enforcement action. For example, it would be meaningless to verbally request consent to search if the deputy is unable to effectively communicate with an individual who is deaf or hard of hearing and requires communications assistance.

If available, deputies should obtain the assistance of a qualified interpreter before placing an individual with a disability under arrest. Individuals who are arrested and are assisted by service animals should be permitted to make arrangements for the care of such animals prior to transport.

### **370.13.1 FIELD RESOURCES**

Examples of methods that may be sufficient for transactions, such as checking a license or giving directions to a location or for urgent situations such as responding to a violent crime in progress, may, depending on the circumstances, include such simple things as:

- (a) Hand gestures or visual aids with an individual who is deaf, hard of hearing or has impaired speech.
- (b) Exchange of written notes or communications.
- (c) Verbal communication with an individual who can speechread by facing the individual and speaking slowly and clearly.
- (d) Use of computer, word processing, personal communication device or similar device to exchange texts or notes.
- (e) Slowly and clearly speaking or reading simple terms to individuals who have a visual or mental impairment.

Members should be aware that these techniques may not provide effective communication as required by law and this policy depending on the circumstances.

### **370.14 CUSTODIAL INTERROGATIONS**

In an effort to ensure that the rights of individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech impairment are protected during a custodial interrogation, this department will provide interpreter services before beginning an interrogation, unless exigent circumstances exist or the individual has made a clear indication that he/she understands the process and desires to proceed without an interpreter. The use of a video remote interpreting service should be considered, where appropriate, if a live interpreter is not available. *Miranda* warnings shall be provided to suspects who are deaf or hard of hearing by a qualified interpreter or by providing a written *Miranda* warning card.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

In order to ensure that communications during custodial investigations are accurately documented and are admissible as evidence, interrogations should be recorded whenever reasonably possible. See guidance on recording custodial interrogations in the Investigation and Prosecution Policy.

#### **370.15 ARREST AND BOOKINGS**

If an individual with speech or hearing disabilities is arrested, the arresting deputy shall use department-approved procedures to provide a qualified interpreter at the place of arrest or booking as soon as reasonably practicable, unless the individual indicates that he/she prefers a different auxiliary aid or service or the deputy reasonably determines another effective method of communication exists under the circumstances.

When gathering information during the booking process, members should remain alert to the impediments that often exist when communicating with those who are deaf, hard of hearing, who have impaired speech or vision, are blind, or have other disabilities. In the interest of the arrestee's health and welfare, the safety and security of the facility and to protect individual rights, it is important that accurate medical screening and booking information be obtained. If necessary, members should seek the assistance of a qualified interpreter whenever there is concern that accurate information cannot be obtained or that booking instructions may not be properly understood by the individual.

Individuals who require and possess personally owned communication aids (e.g., hearing aids, cochlear processors) should be permitted to retain them while in custody.

#### **370.16 COMPLAINTS**

The Department shall ensure that individuals with disabilities who wish to file a complaint regarding members of this department are able to do so. The Department may provide a qualified interpreter or forms in enlarged print, as appropriate. Complaints will be referred to the department ADA Coordinator.

Investigations into such complaints shall be handled in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy. Qualified interpreters used during the investigation of a complaint should not be members of this Department.

#### **370.17 COMMUNITY OUTREACH**

Community outreach programs and other such services offered by this department are important to the ultimate success of more traditional law enforcement duties. This department will continue to work with community groups, local businesses and neighborhoods to provide equal access to such programs and services.

#### **370.18 TRAINING**

To ensure that all members who may have contact with individuals who are disabled are properly trained, the Department will provide periodic training that should include:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Communications with Persons with Disabilities*

---

- (a) Awareness and understanding of this policy and related procedures, related forms and available resources.
- (b) Procedures for accessing qualified interpreters and other available resources.
- (c) Working with in-person and telephone interpreters and related equipment.

The Training Manager shall be responsible for ensuring new members receive training related to interacting with individuals who have disabilities, including individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, who have impaired speech or vision, or are blind. Those who may have contact with such individuals should receive refresher training at least once every two years thereafter. The Training Manager shall maintain records of all training provided, and will retain a copy in each member's training file in accordance with established records retention schedules.

#### 370.18.1 CALL-TAKER TRAINING

Emergency call-takers shall be trained in the use of TTY equipment protocols for communicating with individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or who have speech impairments. Such training and information should include:

- (a) The requirements of the ADA and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act for telephone emergency service providers.
- (b) ASL syntax and accepted abbreviations.
- (c) Practical instruction on identifying and processing TTY or TDD calls, including the importance of recognizing silent TTY or TDD calls, using proper syntax, abbreviations and protocol when responding to TTY or TDD calls.
- (d) Hands-on experience in TTY and TDD communications, including identification of TTY or TDD tones.

Training should be mandatory for all Dispatch members who may have contact with individuals from the public who are deaf, hard of hearing or have impaired speech. Refresher training should occur every six months.

# Mandatory Employer Notification

## **372.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to describe the requirements and procedures to follow when a public or private school employee (teacher and non-teacher) has been arrested under certain circumstances.

## **372.2 MANDATORY SCHOOL EMPLOYEE ARREST REPORTING**

In the event a school employee is arrested for any offense enumerated below, the Sheriff or his/her designee is required to report the arrest as follows.

### **372.2.1 ARREST OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE INSTRUCTOR**

In the event a teacher or instructor employed in a community college district school is arrested for any controlled substance offense enumerated in Health and Safety Code § 11590 or Health and Safety § 11364, in so far as that section relates to Health and Safety Code § 11054(d)(9), or for any of the offenses enumerated in Penal Code § 290 or in Penal Code § 261(a)(1), the Sheriff or the authorized designee is mandated to immediately notify by telephone the superintendent of the community college district employing the person, and shall immediately give written notice of the arrest to the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office (Health and Safety Code § 11591.5; Penal Code § 291.5).

## **372.3 POLICY**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will meet the reporting requirements of California law to minimize the risks to children and others.

## **372.4 ARREST OF PERSONS EMPLOYED IN COMMUNITY CARE FACILITIES**

In the event an employee of a community treatment facility, a day treatment facility, a group home, a short-term residential therapeutic program or a foster family agency is arrested for child abuse (as defined in Penal Code § 11165.6) and the employee is free to return to work where children are present, the investigating member shall notify the licensee of the charge of abuse (Health and Safety Code § 1522.2).

## Chaplains

### 376.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for Merced County Sheriff's Office chaplains to provide counseling or emotional support to members of the Department, their families and members of the public.

### 376.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office shall ensure that department chaplains are properly appointed, trained and supervised to carry out their responsibilities without financial compensation.

### 376.3 ELIGIBILITY

Requirements for participation as a chaplain for the Department may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Being above reproach, temperate, prudent, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, be free from addiction to alcohol or other drugs, and excessive debt.
- (b) Managing their households, families and personal affairs well.
- (c) Having a good reputation in the community.
- (d) Successful completion of an appropriate-level background investigation.
- (e) A minimum of five years of successful counseling experience.
- (f) Possession of a valid driver license.

The Sheriff may apply exceptions for eligibility based on organizational needs and the qualifications of the individual.

### 376.4 RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

The Merced County Sheriff's Office shall endeavor to recruit and appoint only those applicants who meet the high ethical, moral and professional standards set forth by this department.

All applicants shall be required to meet and pass the same pre-employment procedures as department personnel before appointment.

#### 376.4.1 SELECTION AND APPOINTMENT

Chaplain candidates shall successfully complete the following process prior to appointment as a chaplain:

- (a) Submit the appropriate written application.
- (b) Include a recommendation from employers or volunteer programs.
- (c) Interview with the Sheriff and the chaplain coordinator.
- (d) Successfully complete an appropriate-level background investigation.
- (e) Complete an appropriate probationary period as designated by the Sheriff.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Chaplains*

---

Chaplains are volunteers and serve at the discretion of the Sheriff. Chaplains shall have no property interest in continued appointment. However, if a chaplain is removed for alleged misconduct, the chaplain will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a liberty interest hearing, which shall be limited to a single appearance before the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

#### **376.5 IDENTIFICATION AND UNIFORMS**

As representatives of the Department, chaplains are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Chaplains shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties. Uniforms and necessary safety equipment will be provided for each chaplain. Identification symbols worn by chaplains shall be different and distinct from those worn by deputies through the inclusion of "Chaplain" on the uniform and not reflect any religious affiliation.

Chaplains will be issued Merced County Sheriff's Office identification cards, which must be carried at all times while on-duty. The identification cards will be the standard Merced County Sheriff's Office identification cards, with the exception that "Chaplain" will be indicated on the cards. Chaplains shall be required to return any issued uniforms or department property at the termination of service.

Chaplains shall conform to all uniform regulations and appearance standards of this department.

#### **376.6 CHAPLAIN COORDINATOR**

The Sheriff shall delegate certain responsibilities to a chaplain coordinator. The coordinator shall be appointed by and directly responsible to the Administration Captain or the authorized designee.

The chaplain coordinator shall serve as the liaison between the chaplains and the Sheriff. The function of the coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective chaplain management within the Department, and to direct and assist efforts to jointly provide more productive chaplain services. Under the general direction of the Sheriff or the authorized designee, chaplains shall report to the chaplain coordinator and/or Patrol Lieutenant.

The chaplain coordinator may appoint a senior chaplain or other designee to assist in the coordination of chaplains and their activities.

The responsibilities of the coordinator or the authorized designee include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified chaplains.
- (b) Conducting chaplain meetings.
- (c) Establishing and maintaining a chaplain callout roster.
- (d) Maintaining records for each chaplain.
- (e) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of chaplains.
- (f) Maintaining a record of chaplain schedules and work hours.
- (g) Completing and disseminating, as appropriate, all necessary paperwork and information.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Chaplains*

---

- (h) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (i) Maintaining liaison with other agency chaplain coordinators.

An evaluation of the overall use of chaplains will be conducted on an annual basis by the coordinator.

#### **376.7 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Chaplains assist the Department, its members and the community, as needed. Assignments of chaplains will usually be to augment the Uniform Patrol Division . Chaplains may be assigned to other areas within the Department as needed. Chaplains should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Department.

All chaplains will be assigned to duties by the chaplain coordinator or the authorized designee.

Chaplains may not proselytize or attempt to recruit members of the Department or the public into a religious affiliation while representing themselves as chaplains with this department. If there is any question as to the receiving person's intent, chaplains should verify that the person is desirous of spiritual counseling or guidance before engaging in such discussion.

Chaplains may not accept gratuities for any service or any subsequent actions or follow-up contacts that were provided while functioning as a chaplain for the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

##### **376.7.1 COMPLIANCE**

Chaplains are volunteer members of this department, and except as otherwise specified within this policy, are required to comply with the Volunteer Program Policy and other applicable policies.

##### **376.7.2 ASSISTING DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

The responsibilities of a chaplain related to department members include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting in making notification to families of members who have been seriously injured or killed and, after notification, responding to the hospital or home of the member.
- (b) Visiting sick or injured members in the hospital or at home.
- (c) Attending and participating, when requested, in funerals of active or retired members.
- (d) Serving as a resource for members when dealing with the public in incidents, such as accidental deaths, suicides, suicidal subjects, serious accidents, drug and alcohol abuse and other such situations that may arise.
- (e) Providing counseling and support for members and their families.
- (f) Being alert to the needs of members and their families.

##### **376.7.3 ASSISTING THE COMMUNITY**

The duties of a chaplain related to the community include, but are not limited to:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Chaplains*

---

- (a) Fostering familiarity with the role of law enforcement in the community.
- (b) Providing an additional link between the community, other chaplain coordinators and the Department.
- (c) Providing liaison with various civic, business and religious organizations.
- (d) Promptly facilitating requests for representatives or leaders of various denominations.
- (e) Assisting the community in any other function as needed or requested.
- (f) Making referrals in cases where specialized attention is needed or in cases that are beyond the chaplain's ability to assist.

#### **376.7.4 CHAPLAIN MEETINGS**

All chaplains are required to attend scheduled meetings. Any absences must be satisfactorily explained to the chaplain coordinator.

#### **376.8 PRIVILEGED COMMUNICATIONS**

No person who provides chaplain services to members of the Department may work or volunteer for the Merced County Sheriff's Office in any capacity other than that of chaplain.

Department chaplains shall be familiar with state evidentiary laws and rules pertaining to the limits of the clergy-penitent, psychotherapist-patient and other potentially applicable privileges and shall inform members when it appears reasonably likely that the member is discussing matters that are not subject to privileged communications. In such cases, the chaplain should consider referring the member to a non-department counseling resource.

No chaplain shall provide counsel to or receive confidential communications from any Merced County Sheriff's Office member concerning an incident personally witnessed by the chaplain or concerning an incident involving the chaplain.

#### **376.9 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES**

- (a) Chaplains will be scheduled to be on-call for a period of seven days at a time during each month, beginning on Monday and ending on the following Sunday.
- (b) Generally, each chaplain will serve with Merced County Sheriff's Office personnel a minimum of eight hours per month.
- (c) At the end of each watch the chaplain will complete a Chaplain Shift Report and submit it to the Sheriff or his designee.
- (d) Chaplains shall be permitted to ride with deputies during any shift and observe Merced County Sheriff's Office operations, provided a field supervisor has been notified and approved of the activity.
- (e) Chaplains shall not be evaluators of employees and shall not be required to report on an employee's performance or conduct.
- (f) In responding to incidents, a chaplain shall never function as a deputy sheriff.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Chaplains*

---

- (g) When responding to in-progress calls for service, chaplains may be required to stand-by in a secure area until the situation has been deemed safe.
- (h) Chaplains shall serve only within the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office unless otherwise authorized by the Sheriff or his designee.
- (i) Each chaplain shall have access to current personnel rosters, addresses, telephone numbers, duty assignments and other information that may assist in their duties. Such Information will be considered confidential and each chaplain will exercise appropriate security measures to prevent distribution of the information.

## Sheriff's Security Attendants

### 377.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Merced County Sheriff's Department utilizes civilian security personnel for the staffing of screening stations at Court and other designated county facilities. The purpose of this policy is to provide operational guidelines for those personnel.

#### 377.1.1 DUTIES

The primary function of Sheriff's Security Attendants is to conduct weapons screening at court facilities.

a) All persons entering a court facility or designated county facility through the public doors will be screened. Any packages other than court files will be screened.

1. This includes the use of X-ray machines and magnetometers (metal detectors); walk-through as well as hand-held.

2. In the event of an uncooperative person a Deputy Sheriff will be summoned.

b) In the case of an emergency, Sheriff's Security Attendants shall immediately summon assistance and

1. will not attempt to physically restrain a subject.

2. use the radio to call for Deputies whenever necessary

3. request assistance from near-by peace officers, if able.

4. may follow the subject at a safe distance to provide information over the radio.

The following individuals will typically be exempt from these screening procedures: on-duty peace officers having official business with the courts in their capacities as peace officers and not for personal business, judges, and Merced County District Attorney and Public Defender employees. These exemptions are subject to standing Merced County Superior Court Rules of Court or the order of the Presiding Judge of the Merced County Superior Court.

#### 377.1.2 USE OF FORCE

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Department that Sheriff's Security Attendants are generally prohibited from the use of force.

#### 377.1.3 USE OF ECD ("TASER") DEVICE

The ECD should only be deployed in self-defense or the defense of another, in accordance with Policy Manual § 309 ("Electronic Control Device Guidelines")

# Public Safety Video Surveillance System

## 378.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for the placement and monitoring of department public safety video surveillance, as well as the storage and release of the captured images.

This policy only applies to overt, marked public safety video surveillance systems operated by the Department. It does not apply to mobile audio/video systems, covert audio/video systems or any other image-capturing devices used by the Department.

## 378.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office operates a public safety video surveillance system to complement its anti-crime strategy, to effectively allocate and deploy personnel, and to enhance public safety and security in public areas. Cameras may be placed in strategic locations throughout the County to detect and deter crime, to help safeguard against potential threats to the public, to help manage emergency response situations during natural and man-made disasters and to assist County officials in providing services to the community.

Video surveillance in public areas will be conducted in a legal and ethical manner while recognizing and protecting constitutional standards of privacy.

## 378.3 OPERATIONAL GUIDELINES

Only department-approved video surveillance equipment shall be utilized. Members authorized to monitor video surveillance equipment should only monitor public areas and public activities where no reasonable expectation of privacy exists. The Sheriff or the authorized designee shall approve all proposed locations for the use of video surveillance technology and should consult with and be guided by legal counsel as necessary in making such determinations.

### 378.3.1 PLACEMENT AND MONITORING

Camera placement will be guided by the underlying purpose or strategy associated with the overall video surveillance plan. As appropriate, the Sheriff should confer with other affected County divisions and designated community groups when evaluating camera placement. Environmental factors, including lighting, location of buildings, presence of vegetation or other obstructions, should also be evaluated when determining placement.

The cameras shall only record video images and not sound. Recorded images may be used for a variety of purposes, including criminal investigations and monitoring of activity around high-value or high-threat areas. The public video surveillance system may be useful for the following purposes:

- (a) To prevent, deter and identify criminal activity.
- (b) To target identified areas of gang and narcotics complaints or activity.
- (c) To respond to critical incidents.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Public Safety Video Surveillance System*

---

- (d) To assist in identifying, apprehending and prosecuting offenders.
- (e) To document deputy and offender conduct during interactions to safeguard the rights of the public and deputies
- (f) To augment resources in a cost-effective manner.
- (g) To monitor pedestrian and vehicle traffic activity.

Images from each camera should be recorded in a manner consistent with the underlying purpose of the particular camera. Images should be transmitted to monitors installed in the various patrol offices and Dispatch. When activity warranting further investigation is reported or detected at any camera location, the available information should be provided to responding deputies in a timely manner. The Area Lieutenant or trained Dispatch personnel are authorized to adjust the cameras to more effectively view a particular area for any legitimate public safety purpose.

The Sheriff may authorize video feeds from the public safety video surveillance system to be forwarded to a specified location for monitoring by other than sheriff's personnel, such as allied government agencies, road or traffic crews, or fire or emergency operations personnel.

Unauthorized recording, viewing, reproduction, dissemination or retention is prohibited.

#### **378.3.2 CAMERA MARKINGS**

All public areas monitored by public safety surveillance equipment shall be placed in such a manner as to not interfere with the motoring public safety and visibility.

#### **378.3.3 INTEGRATION WITH OTHER TECHNOLOGY**

The Department may elect to integrate its public safety video surveillance system with other technology to enhance available information. Systems such as gunshot detection, incident mapping, crime analysis, license plate recognition, facial recognition and other video-based analytical systems may be considered based upon availability and the nature of department strategy.

The Department should evaluate the availability and propriety of networking or otherwise collaborating with appropriate private sector entities and should evaluate whether the use of certain camera systems, such as pan-tilt-zoom systems and video enhancement or other analytical technology, requires additional safeguards.

#### **378.4 VIDEO SUPERVISION**

Supervisors should monitor video surveillance access and usage to ensure members are within department policy and applicable laws. Supervisors should ensure such use and access is appropriately documented.

##### **378.4.1 PROHIBITED ACTIVITY**

Public safety video surveillance systems will not intentionally be used to invade the privacy of individuals or observe areas where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Public Safety Video Surveillance System*

---

Public video surveillance equipment shall not be used in an unequal or discriminatory manner and shall not target protected individual characteristics including, but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation.

Video surveillance equipment shall not be used to harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group.

#### **378.5 STORAGE AND RETENTION OF MEDIA**

All downloaded media shall be stored in a secure area with access restricted to authorized persons. A recording needed as evidence shall be copied to a suitable medium and booked into evidence in accordance with established evidence procedures. All actions taken with respect to retention of media shall be appropriately documented.

The type of video surveillance technology employed and the manner in which recordings are used and stored will affect retention periods. The recordings should be stored and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and for a minimum of one year. Prior to destruction, written consent shall be obtained from the County Counsel. If recordings are evidence in any claim filed or any pending litigation, they shall be preserved until pending litigation is resolved (Government Code § 34090.6).

Any recordings needed as evidence in a criminal or civil proceeding shall be copied to a suitable medium and booked into evidence in accordance with current evidence procedures.

##### **378.5.1 EVIDENTIARY INTEGRITY**

All downloaded and retained media shall be treated in the same manner as other evidence. Media shall be accessed, maintained, stored and retrieved in a manner that ensures its integrity as evidence, including strict adherence to chain of custody requirements. Electronic trails, including encryption, digital masking of innocent or uninvolved individuals to preserve anonymity, authenticity certificates and date and time stamping, shall be used as appropriate to preserve individual rights and to ensure the authenticity and maintenance of a secure evidentiary chain of custody.

#### **378.6 RELEASE OF VIDEO IMAGES**

All recorded video images gathered by the public safety video surveillance equipment are for the official use of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

Requests for recorded video images from the public or the media shall be processed in the same manner as requests for department public records.

Requests for recorded images from other law enforcement agencies shall be referred to the Undersheriff for release in accordance with a specific and legitimate law enforcement purpose.

Recorded video images that are the subject of a court order or subpoena shall be processed in accordance with the established department subpoena process.

## *Public Safety Video Surveillance System*

---

### **378.7 VIDEO SURVEILLANCE AUDIT**

The Sheriff or the authorized designee will conduct an annual review of the public safety video surveillance system. The review should include an analysis of the cost, benefit and effectiveness of the system, including any public safety issues that were effectively addressed or any significant prosecutions that resulted, and any systemic operational or administrative issues that were identified, including those related to training, discipline or policy.

The results of each review shall be appropriately documented and maintained by the Sheriff or the authorized designee and other applicable advisory bodies. Any recommendations for training or policy should be promptly addressed.

### **378.8 TRAINING**

All department members authorized to operate or access public video surveillance systems shall receive appropriate training. Training should include guidance on the use of cameras, interaction with dispatch and patrol operations and a review regarding relevant policies and procedures, including this policy. Training should also address state and federal law related to the use of video surveillance equipment and privacy.

## Child and Dependent Adult Safety

### 380.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that children and dependent adults are not left without appropriate care in the event their caregiver or guardian is arrested or otherwise prevented from providing care due to actions taken by members of this department (Penal Code § 833.2(a)).

This policy does not address the actions to be taken during the course of a child abuse or dependent adult investigation. These are covered in the Child Abuse and Adult Abuse policies.

### 380.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to mitigate, to the extent reasonably possible, the stressful experience individuals may have when their parent or caregiver is arrested. The Merced County Sheriff's Office will endeavor to create a strong, cooperative relationship with local, state and community-based social services to ensure an effective, collaborative response that addresses the needs of those affected, including call-out availability and follow-up responsibilities.

### 380.3 PROCEDURES DURING AN ARREST

When encountering an arrest or prolonged detention situation, deputies should make reasonable attempts to determine if the arrestee is responsible for children or dependent adults. In some cases this may be obvious, such as when children or dependent adults are present. However, deputies should inquire if the arrestee has caregiver responsibilities for any children or dependent adults who are without appropriate supervision. The following steps should be taken (Penal Code § 13517.7(b)(1)):

- (a) Inquire about and confirm the location of any children or dependent adults.
- (b) Look for evidence of children and dependent adults. Deputies should be mindful that some arrestees may conceal the fact that they have a dependent for fear the individual may be taken from them.
- (c) Consider inquiring of witnesses, neighbors, friends and relatives of the arrestee as to whether the person is responsible for a child or dependent adult.

Whenever reasonably possible, deputies should take reasonable steps to accomplish the arrest of a parent, guardian or caregiver out of the presence of his/her child or dependent adult. Removing children or dependent adults from the scene in advance of the arrest will generally ensure the best outcome for the individual.

Whenever it is safe to do so, deputies should allow the parent or caregiver to assure children or dependent adults that they will be provided care. If this is not safe or if the demeanor of the parent or caregiver suggests this conversation would be non-productive, the deputy at the scene should explain the reason for the arrest in age-appropriate language and offer reassurance to the child or dependent adult that he/she will receive appropriate care.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Child and Dependent Adult Safety*

---

#### 380.3.1 AFTER AN ARREST

Whenever an arrest is made, the deputy should take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the arrestee's disclosed or discovered children or dependent adults.

Deputies should allow the arrestee reasonable time to arrange for care of children and dependent adults. Temporary placement with family or friends may be appropriate. However, any decision should give priority to a care solution that is in the best interest of the child or dependent adult. In such cases the following guidelines should be followed:

- (a) Allow the person reasonable time to arrange for the care of children and dependent adults with a responsible party, as appropriate.
  - 1. Deputies should consider allowing the person to use his/her cell phone to facilitate arrangements through access to contact phone numbers, and to lessen the likelihood of call screening by the recipients due to calls from unknown sources.
- (b) Unless there is evidence to the contrary (e.g., signs of abuse, drug use, unsafe environment), deputies should respect the parent or caregiver's judgment regarding arrangements for care. It is generally best if the child or dependent adult remains with relatives or family friends that he/she knows and trusts because familiarity with surroundings and consideration for comfort, emotional state and safety are important.
  - 1. Except when a court order exists limiting contact, the deputy should attempt to locate and place children or dependent adults with the non-arrested parent, guardian or caregiver.
- (c) Provide for the immediate supervision of children or dependent adults until an appropriate caregiver arrives.
- (d) Notify Child Protective Services or the Division of Aging and Adult Services, if appropriate.
- (e) Notify the field supervisor or Patrol Lieutenant of the disposition of children or dependent adults.

If children or dependent adults are at school or another known location outside the household at the time of arrest, the arresting deputy should attempt to contact the school or other known location and inform the principal or appropriate responsible adult of the caregiver's arrest and of the arrangements being made for the care of the arrestee's dependent. The result of such actions should be documented in the associated report.

#### 380.3.2 DURING THE BOOKING PROCESS

During the booking process the arrestee shall be allowed to make additional telephone calls to relatives or other responsible individuals as is reasonably necessary to arrange for the care of any child or dependent adult. These telephone calls should be given as soon as practicable and are in addition to any other telephone calls allowed by law (Penal Code § 851.5(c)).

## *Child and Dependent Adult Safety*

---

If an arrestee is unable to resolve the care of any child or dependent adult through this process, a supervisor should be contacted to determine the appropriate steps to arrange for care. These steps may include additional telephone calls or contacting a local, county or state services agency.

### **380.3.3 REPORTING**

- (a) For all arrests where children are present or living in the household, the reporting member will document the following information:
  - 1. Name
  - 2. Sex
  - 3. Age
  - 4. Special needs (e.g., medical, mental health)
  - 5. How, where and with whom or which agency the child was placed
  - 6. Identities and contact information for other potential caregivers
  - 7. Notifications made to other adults (e.g., schools, relatives)
- (b) For all arrests where dependent adults are present or living in the household, the reporting member will document the following information:
  - 1. Name
  - 2. Sex
  - 3. Age
  - 4. Whether he/she reasonably appears able to care for him/herself
  - 5. Disposition or placement information if he/she is unable to care for him/herself

### **380.3.4 SUPPORT AND COUNSELING REFERRAL**

If, in the judgment of the handling deputies, the child or dependent adult would benefit from additional assistance, such as counseling services, contact with a victim advocate or a crisis telephone number, the appropriate referral information may be provided.

### **380.4 DEPENDENT WELFARE SERVICES**

Whenever an arrestee is unwilling or incapable of arranging for the appropriate care of any child or dependent adult, the handling deputy should contact the appropriate welfare service or other department-approved social service to determine whether protective custody is appropriate (Welfare and Institutions Code § 305).

Only when other reasonable options are exhausted should a child or dependent adult be transported to the sheriff's facility, transported in a marked patrol car or taken into formal protective custody.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Child and Dependent Adult Safety*

---

Under no circumstances should a child or dependent adult be left unattended or without appropriate care.

## Service Animals

### 382.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the guidelines necessary to ensure the rights of individuals who use service animals to assist with disabilities are protected in accordance with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA).

#### 382.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Service animal** - A dog that is trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual or other mental disability. The work or tasks performed by a service animal must be directly related to the individual's disability (28 CFR 35.104; Health and Safety Code § 113903).

Service animal also includes a miniature horse if the horse is trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities, provided the horse is housebroken, is under the handler's control, the facility can accommodate the horse's type, size and weight, and the horse's presence will not compromise legitimate safety requirements necessary for safe operation of the facility (28 CFR 35.136(i)).

### 382.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to provide services and access to persons with service animals in the same manner as those without service animals. Department members shall protect the rights of persons assisted by service animals in accordance with state and federal law.

### 382.3 IDENTIFICATION AND USE OF SERVICE ANIMALS

Some service animals may be readily identifiable. However, many do not have a distinctive symbol, harness or collar.

Service animals may be used in a number of ways to provide assistance, including:

- Guiding people who are blind or have low vision.
- Alerting people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
- Retrieving or picking up items, opening doors or flipping switches for people who have limited use of their hands, arms or legs.
- Pulling wheelchairs.
- Providing physical support and assisting with stability and balance.
- Doing work or performing tasks for persons with traumatic brain injury, intellectual disabilities or psychiatric disabilities, such as reminding a person with depression to take medication.
- Alerting a person with anxiety to the onset of panic attacks, providing tactile stimulation to calm a person with post-traumatic stress disorder, assisting people with

## *Service Animals*

---

schizophrenia to distinguish between hallucinations and reality, and helping people with traumatic brain injury to locate misplaced items or follow daily routines.

### **382.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Service animals that are assisting individuals with disabilities are permitted in all public facilities and areas where the general public is allowed. Department members are expected to treat individuals with service animals with the same courtesy and respect that the Merced County Sheriff's Office affords to all members of the public (28 CFR 35.136).

#### **382.4.1 INQUIRY**

If it is apparent or if a member is aware that an animal is a service animal, the individual generally should not be asked any questions as to the status of the animal. If it is unclear whether an animal meets the definition of a service animal, the member should ask the individual only the following questions (28 CFR 35.136(f)):

- Is the animal required because of a disability?
- What task or service has the service animal been trained to perform?

If the individual explains that the animal is required because of a disability and has been trained to work or perform at least one task, the animal meets the definition of a service animal and no further questions as to the animal's status should be asked. The individual should not be questioned about his/her disability nor should the person be asked to provide any license, certification or identification card for the service animal.

#### **382.4.2 CONTACT**

Service animals are not pets. Department members should not interfere with the important work performed by a service animal by talking to, petting or otherwise initiating contact with a service animal.

#### **382.4.3 REMOVAL**

If a service animal is not housebroken or exhibits vicious behavior, poses a direct threat to the health of others, or unreasonably disrupts or interferes with normal business operations, a deputy may direct the handler to remove the animal from the premises. Barking alone is not a threat nor does a direct threat exist if the person takes prompt, effective action to control the service animal (28 CFR 35.136(b)).

Each incident must be considered individually and past incidents alone are not cause for excluding a service animal. Removal of a service animal may not be used as a reason to refuse service to an individual with disabilities. Members of this department are expected to provide all services as are reasonably available to an individual with a disability, with or without a service animal.

#### **382.4.4 COMPLAINTS**

When handling calls of a complaint regarding a service animal, members of this department should remain neutral and should be prepared to explain the ADA requirements concerning service

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Service Animals*

---

animals to the concerned parties. Businesses are required to allow service animals to accompany their handlers into the same areas that other customers or members of the public are allowed (28 CFR 36.302).

Absent a violation of law independent of the ADA, deputies should take no enforcement action beyond keeping the peace. Individuals who believe they have been discriminated against as a result of a disability should be referred to the Civil Rights Division of the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

## Volunteer Program

### 384.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of this department to use qualified volunteers for specified tasks and duties in order to create efficiencies for the Department and improve services to the community. Volunteers are intended to supplement and support, rather than supplant, sworn deputies and civilian personnel. Volunteers can be an important part of any organization and are proven to be a valuable asset to law enforcement agencies. Volunteers help to increase departmental responsiveness, delivery of services and information input, and provide new program opportunities. In addition, volunteers bring new skills and expertise to the Department and prompt new enthusiasm.

#### 384.1.1 DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER

An individual who performs a service for the Department without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered. This may include unpaid chaplains, unpaid reserve deputies, interns, persons providing administrative support and youth involved in a law enforcement Explorer Post, among others. The Department must not utilize the services of a volunteer in such a way that it would violate employment laws.

### 384.2 VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

The Public Information Officer is designated as the manager of the volunteers. The Volunteer Coordinator reports directly to the Undersheriff.

#### 384.2.1 VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

The function of the Volunteer Coordinator is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer management within the Department, and to direct and assist staff and volunteer efforts to jointly provide more productive services. The Volunteer Coordinator should work with other Department staff on an ongoing basis to assist in the development and implementation of volunteer-staffed positions. The Volunteer Coordinator, or his/her designee, shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) CLEO Office coordination and management.
- (b) Recruiting, selecting and training qualified volunteers for various positions.
- (c) Facilitating the implementation of new volunteer activities and assignments.
- (d) Maintaining records for each volunteer.
- (e) Tracking and evaluating the contribution of volunteers.
- (f) Maintaining the volunteer handbook and outlining expectations, policies and responsibilities for all volunteers.
- (g) Maintaining a record of volunteer schedules and work hours.
- (h) Completion and dissemination as appropriate of all necessary paperwork and information.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Volunteer Program*

---

- (i) Planning periodic recognition events.
- (j) Administering discipline when warranted.
- (k) Maintaining liaison with other volunteer-utilizing programs in the community and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering.

#### 384.2.2 RECRUITMENT

Volunteers should be recruited on a continuous and ongoing basis consistent with department policy on equal opportunity nondiscriminatory employment. A primary qualification for participation in the application process should be an interest in, and an ability to assist the Department in serving the public.

Requests for volunteers should be submitted in writing by interested staff to the Volunteer Coordinator through the requester's immediate supervisor. A complete position description and a requested time-frame should be included in the request. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting assignments. The Volunteer Coordinator may withhold assignment of any volunteer until such time as the requesting unit is prepared to make effective use of volunteer resources.

#### 384.2.3 SCREENING

All prospective volunteers should complete the volunteer application form. The Volunteer Coordinator or designee should conduct a face-to-face interview with an applicant under consideration.

The Background Unit shall be responsible for conducting volunteer background investigations. A documented background investigation shall be completed on each volunteer applicant and shall include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- (a) Traffic and criminal background check. Fingerprints shall be obtained from all applicants and processed through the California Criminal Information Index ("Live-Scan").
- (b) Employment
- (c) References/Friends/Family

A polygraph exam may be required of each applicant depending on the type of assignment.

#### 384.2.4 SELECTION AND PLACEMENT

Service as a volunteer with the Department shall begin with an official notice of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position. Notice may only be given by an authorized representative of the Department, who will normally be the Volunteer Coordinator. No volunteer should begin any assignment until they have been officially accepted for that position and completed all required screening and paperwork. At the time of final acceptance, each volunteer should complete all required enrollment paperwork and will receive a copy of their position description and agreement

## *Volunteer Program*

---

of service with the Department. All volunteers shall receive a copy of the volunteer handbook and shall be required to sign a volunteer agreement.

Volunteers should be placed only in assignments or programs that are consistent with their knowledge, skills, abilities and the needs of the Department.

### 384.2.5 TRAINING

Volunteers will be provided with an orientation program to acquaint them with the Department, personnel, policies and procedures that have a direct impact on their work assignment.

Volunteers should receive position-specific training to ensure they have adequate knowledge and skills to complete tasks required by the position and should receive periodic ongoing training as deemed appropriate by their supervisor or the Volunteer Coordinator.

Training should reinforce to volunteers that they may not intentionally represent themselves as, or by omission infer that they are sworn deputies or other full-time members of the Department. They shall always represent themselves as volunteers.

All volunteers shall comply with the rules of conduct and with all orders and directives, either oral or written, issued by the Department.

### 384.2.6 FITNESS FOR DUTY

No volunteer shall report to work or be on-duty when his/her judgment or physical condition has been impaired by alcohol, medication, other substances, illness or injury.

Volunteers shall report to their supervisor any changes in status that may affect their ability to fulfill their duties. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (a) Driver license
- (b) Medical condition
- (c) Arrests
- (d) Criminal investigations

All volunteers shall adhere to the guidelines set forth by this department regarding drug and alcohol use.

### 384.2.7 DRESS CODE

As representatives of the Department, volunteers are responsible for presenting a professional image to the community. Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions and performance of their duties.

Volunteers shall conform to department-approved dress consistent with their duty assignment. Uniforms authorized for volunteers should be readily distinguishable from those worn by sworn deputies. The uniform or identifiable parts of the uniform shall not be worn while off-duty except volunteers may choose to wear the uniform while in transit to or from official department assignments or functions provided an outer garment is worn over the uniform shirt so as not to

## *Volunteer Program*

---

bring attention to the volunteer while he/she is off duty. The standard Volunteer uniform is the standard department white uniform shirt and green trousers.

Volunteers shall be required to return any issued uniform or department property at the termination of service.

### **384.3 SUPERVISION OF VOLUNTEERS**

Each volunteer who is accepted to a position with the Department must have a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor will be responsible for day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and should be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

A volunteer may be assigned as and act as a supervisor of other volunteers provided that the supervising volunteer is under the direct supervision of a paid staff member.

Functional supervision of volunteers is the responsibility of the supervisor in charge of the unit where the volunteer is assigned. Following are some considerations to keep in mind while supervising volunteers:

- (a) Take the time to introduce volunteers to employees on all levels.
- (b) Ensure volunteers have work space and necessary office supplies.
- (c) Make sure the work is challenging. Do not hesitate to give them an assignment or task that will tap these valuable resources.

#### **384.3.1 SEARCH AND RESCUE LIAISON**

The Operations Captain may appoint an Operations Sergeant to act as the department liaison between management and Search and Rescue volunteers. This position is voluntary and there is no additional financial compensation for this position.

### **384.4 CONFIDENTIALITY**

With appropriate security clearance, volunteers may have access to confidential information such as criminal histories or investigative files. Unless otherwise directed by a supervisor or departmental policy, all information shall be considered confidential. Only that information specifically identified and approved by authorized personnel shall be released. Confidential information shall be given only to persons who have a need and a right to know as determined by departmental policy and supervisory personnel.

Each volunteer will be required to sign a nondisclosure agreement before being given an assignment with the Department. Subsequent unauthorized disclosure of any confidential information, verbally, in writing or by any other means, by the volunteer is grounds for immediate dismissal and possible criminal prosecution.

Volunteers shall not address public gatherings, appear on radio or television, prepare any article for publication, act as correspondents to a newspaper or other periodical, release or divulge

## *Volunteer Program*

---

any information concerning the activities of the Department, or maintain that they represent the Department in such matters without permission from the proper department personnel.

### **384.5 PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT**

Volunteers will be issued an identification card that must be worn at all times while on-duty. Any fixed and portable equipment issued by the Department shall be for official and authorized use only. Any property or equipment issued to a volunteer shall remain the property of the Department and shall be returned at the termination of service.

#### **384.5.1 VEHICLE USE**

Volunteers assigned to duties such as vacation house checks or other assignments that require the use of a vehicle must first complete the following:

- (a) A driving safety briefing and department approved driver safety course.
- (b) Verification that the volunteer possesses a valid California Driver License.
- (c) Verification that the volunteer carries current vehicle insurance.

The Volunteer Coordinator should insure that all volunteers receive safety briefing updates and license and insurance verification at least once a year.

When operating a Department vehicle, volunteers shall obey all rules of the road, including seat belt requirements. Smoking is prohibited in all Department vehicles.

Volunteers should not operate a marked patrol car unless there is a prominently placed sign indicating that it is out of service and are not authorized to operate a Department vehicle Code-3.

#### **384.5.2 RADIO AND MDC USAGE**

Volunteers shall successfully complete CLETS and radio procedures training prior to using the department radio or MDC and comply with all related provisions. The Volunteer Coordinator should ensure that radio and CLETS training is provided for volunteers whenever necessary.

### **384.6 DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES/TERMINATION**

A volunteer may be removed from the volunteer program at the discretion of the Sheriff or the Volunteer Coordinator. Volunteers shall have no property interests in their continued appointment. However, if a volunteer is removed for alleged misconduct, the volunteer will be afforded an opportunity solely to clear his/her name through a liberty interest hearing which shall be limited to a single appearance before the Sheriff or authorized designee.

Volunteers may resign from volunteer service with the Department at any time. It is requested that volunteers who intend to resign provide advance notice of their departure and a reason for their decision.

#### **384.6.1 EXIT INTERVIEWS**

Exit interviews, where possible, should be conducted with volunteers who are leaving their positions. The interview should ascertain why the volunteer is leaving the position and solicit the

## *Volunteer Program*

---

volunteer's suggestions on improving the position. When appropriate, the interview should also include a discussion on the possibility of involvement in some other capacity with the Department.

### **384.7 EVALUATION**

An evaluation of the overall volunteer program will be conducted on an annual basis by the Volunteer Coordinator. Regular evaluations should be conducted with volunteers to ensure the best use of human resources available, to ensure personnel problems can be identified and dealt with promptly and fairly, and to ensure optimum satisfaction on the part of volunteers.

## TRAINING

### 385.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Numerous outside training resources are available to law enforcement agencies in this state. It is this department's policy to provide and make available such training as is necessary to perform assigned duties or to improve employment related skills. This policy provides information to employees regarding these outside training resources.

#### 385.1.1 TRAINING REQUESTS

Requests for training shall be made in the following manner:

The employee shall submit a written memo to his/her immediate supervisor for the desired training. The memo should justify the need for such training. The employee shall attach a copy of the course information including all costs, any special equipment for the class, accommodations and accurate contact information. Once the supervisor has received the memo, the supervisor shall either endorse or decline the request as being pertinent for the employee's duties. If approved, the supervisor will forward the request to the appropriate division captain for final approval.

#### 385.1.2 DEPARTMENT REQUIRED TRAINING

The department may require that personnel, due to the respective assignments or departmental needs, attend certain outside training. Certain costs related to tuition and travel shall be reimbursable to the employee.

## Off-Duty Law Enforcement Actions

### 386.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The decision to become involved in a law enforcement action when off-duty can place a deputy as well as others at great risk and must be done with careful consideration. This policy is intended to provide guidelines for deputies of the Merced County Sheriff's Office with respect to taking law enforcement action while off-duty.

### 386.2 POLICY

Initiating law enforcement action while off-duty is generally discouraged. Deputies should not attempt to initiate enforcement action when witnessing minor crimes, such as suspected intoxicated drivers, reckless driving or minor property crimes. Such incidents should be promptly reported to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

Deputies are not expected to place themselves in unreasonable peril. However, any sworn member of this department who becomes aware of an incident or circumstance that he/she reasonably believes poses an imminent threat of serious bodily injury or death, or significant property damage may take reasonable action to minimize the threat.

When public safety or the prevention of major property damage requires immediate action, deputies should first consider reporting and monitoring the activity and only take direct action as a last resort.

### 386.3 FIREARMS

Deputies of this department may carry firearms while off-duty in accordance with federal regulations and department policy. All firearms and ammunition must meet guidelines as described in the department Firearms Policy. When carrying firearms while off-duty deputies shall also carry their department-issued badge and identification.

Deputies should refrain from carrying firearms when the consumption of alcohol is likely or when the need to carry a firearm is outweighed by safety considerations. Firearms shall not be carried by any deputy who has consumed an amount of an alcoholic beverage or taken any drugs or medications or any combination thereof that would tend to adversely affect the deputy's senses or judgment.

### 386.4 DECISION TO INTERVENE

There is no legal requirement for off-duty deputies to take law enforcement action. However, should deputies decide to intervene, they must evaluate whether the action is necessary or desirable, and should take into consideration the following:

- (a) The tactical disadvantage of being alone and the fact there may be multiple or hidden suspects.
- (b) The inability to communicate with responding units.

## *Off-Duty Law Enforcement Actions*

---

- (c) The lack of equipment, such as handcuffs, OC or baton.
- (d) The lack of cover.
- (e) The potential for increased risk to bystanders if the off-duty deputy were to intervene.
- (f) Unfamiliarity with the surroundings.
- (g) The potential for the off-duty deputy to be misidentified by other peace officers or members of the public.

Deputies should consider waiting for on-duty uniformed deputies to arrive, and gather as much accurate intelligence as possible instead of immediately intervening.

### **386.4.1 INTERVENTION PROCEDURE**

If involvement is reasonably necessary the deputy should attempt to call or have someone else call 9-1-1 to request immediate assistance. The dispatcher should be informed that an off-duty deputy is on-scene and should be provided a description of the officer if possible.

Whenever practicable, the deputy should loudly and repeatedly identify him/herself as an Merced County Sheriff's Office deputy until acknowledged. Official identification should also be displayed.

### **386.4.2 INCIDENTS OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

Deputies should refrain from handling incidents of personal interest, (e.g., family or neighbor disputes) and should remain neutral. In such circumstances deputies should call the responsible agency to handle the matter.

### **386.4.3 CIVILIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

Civilian personnel should not become involved in any law enforcement actions while off-duty except to notify the local law enforcement authority and remain at the scene, if safe and practicable.

### **386.4.4 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

When encountering a non-uniformed deputy in public, uniformed deputies should wait for acknowledgement by the non-uniformed deputy in case he/she needs to maintain an undercover capability.

## **386.5 REPORTING**

Any off-duty deputy who engages in any law enforcement activity, regardless of jurisdiction, shall notify the appropriate on-duty supervisor as soon as practicable who should then report the activity to the Division Captain. The supervisor shall determine whether a report should be filed by the employee.

Deputies should cooperate fully with the agency having jurisdiction in providing statements or reports as requested or as appropriate.

## [Department/Office] Use of Social Media

### 389.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that any use of social media on behalf of the [Department/Office] is consistent with the [department/office] mission.

This policy does not address all aspects of social media use. Specifically, it does not address:

- Personal use of social media by [department/office] members (see the Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking Policy).
- Use of social media in personnel processes (see the Recruitment and Selection Policy).
- Use of social media as part of a criminal investigation, other than disseminating information to the public on behalf of this [department/office] (see the Investigation and Prosecution Policy).

#### 389.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Social media** - Any of a wide array of Internet-based tools and platforms that allow for the sharing of information, such as the [department/office] website or social networking services

### 389.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office may use social media as a method of effectively informing the public about [department/office] services, issues, investigations and other relevant events.

[Department/Office] members shall ensure that the use or access of social media is done in a manner that protects the constitutional rights of all.

### 389.3 AUTHORIZED USERS

Only members authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee may utilize social media on behalf of the [Department/Office]. Authorized members shall use only [department/office]-approved equipment during the normal course of duties to post and monitor [department/office]-related social media, unless they are specifically authorized to do otherwise by their supervisors.

The Sheriff may develop specific guidelines identifying the type of content that may be posted. Any content that does not strictly conform to the guidelines should be approved by a supervisor prior to posting.

Requests to post information over [department/office] social media by members who are not authorized to post should be made through the member's chain of command.

## *[Department/Office] Use of Social Media*

---

### **389.4 AUTHORIZED CONTENT**

Only content that is appropriate for public release, that supports the [department/office] mission and conforms to all [department/office] policies regarding the release of information may be posted.

Examples of appropriate content include:

- (a) Announcements.
- (b) Tips and information related to crime prevention.
- (c) Investigative requests for information.
- (d) Requests that ask the community to engage in projects that are relevant to the [department/office] mission.
- (e) Real-time safety information that is related to in-progress crimes, geographical warnings or disaster information.
- (f) Traffic information.
- (g) Press releases.
- (h) Recruitment of personnel.

#### **389.4.1 INCIDENT-SPECIFIC USE**

In instances of active incidents where speed, accuracy and frequent updates are paramount (e.g., crime alerts, public safety information, traffic issues), the Public Information Officer or the authorized designee will be responsible for the compilation of information to be released, subject to the approval of the Incident Commander.

### **389.5 PROHIBITED CONTENT**

Content that is prohibited from posting includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Content that is abusive, discriminatory, inflammatory or sexually explicit.
- (b) Any information that violates individual rights, including confidentiality and/or privacy rights and those provided under state, federal or local laws.
- (c) Any information that could compromise an ongoing investigation.
- (d) Any information that could tend to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Merced County Sheriff's Office or its members.
- (e) Any information that could compromise the safety and security of [department/office] operations, members of the [Department/Office], victims, suspects or the public.
- (f) Any content posted for personal use.
- (g) Any content that has not been properly authorized by this policy or a supervisor.

Any member who becomes aware of content on this [department/office]'s social media site that he/she believes is unauthorized or inappropriate should promptly report such content to a supervisor. The supervisor will ensure its removal from public view and investigate the cause of the entry.

## *[Department/Office] Use of Social Media*

---

### **389.5.1 PUBLIC POSTING PROHIBITED**

[Department/Office] social media sites shall be designed and maintained to prevent posting of content by the public.

The [Department/Office] may provide a method for members of the public to contact department members directly.

### **389.6 MONITORING CONTENT**

The Sheriff will appoint a supervisor to review, at least annually, the use of [department/office] social media and report back on, at a minimum, the resources being used, the effectiveness of the content, any unauthorized or inappropriate content and the resolution of any issues.

### **389.7 RETENTION OF RECORDS**

The Custodian of Records shall establish a method of ensuring that public records generated in the process of social media use are retained in accordance with established records retention schedules.

### **389.8 TRAINING**

Authorized members should receive training that, at a minimum, addresses legal issues concerning the appropriate use of social media sites, as well as privacy, civil rights, dissemination and retention of information posted on [department/office] sites.

## Gun Violence Restraining Orders

### 390.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for petitioning and serving gun violence restraining orders and accounting for the firearms obtained pursuant to those orders.

#### 390.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Gun violence restraining order** - Civil restraining order prohibiting a named person from controlling, owning, purchasing, possessing, receiving or otherwise having custody of any firearms or ammunition (Penal Code § 18100).

### 390.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to petition and serve gun violence restraining orders in compliance with state law and to properly account for firearms and ammunition obtained by the Department pursuant to such orders.

### 390.3 GUN VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS

A deputy who reasonably believes a person is a present danger to him/herself or another person by controlling, owning, purchasing, possessing, receiving or otherwise having custody of a firearm may request permission from his/her supervisor to petition the court for a gun violence restraining order.

Deputies petitioning the court should use the forms established by the Judicial Council (Penal Code § 18105). The petition should describe the number, types and locations of any firearms and ammunition that the deputy believes to be possessed or controlled by the person (Penal Code § 18107). The petition should also describe why less-restrictive alternatives are ineffective or inadequate for the circumstances (Penal Code § 18125; Penal Code § 18150; Penal Code § 18175).

If it is not practical under the circumstances to submit a written petition, a deputy may orally request an order using the procedures for obtaining an oral search warrant and preparing the order using the appropriate Judicial Council form (Penal Code § 18140; Penal Code § 18145).

### 390.4 SERVICE OF GUN VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS

A deputy serving any gun violence restraining order shall:

- (a) Request that any firearms or ammunition be immediately surrendered and issue a receipt for the surrendered items (Penal Code § 18120).
- (b) Take into temporary custody any firearm or other deadly weapon discovered in plain view or pursuant to consent or other lawful search (Penal Code § 18250).
- (c) Inform the restrained person of any scheduled hearing regarding the order (Penal Code § 18160).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Gun Violence Restraining Orders*

---

- (d) Transmit the original proof of service form to the issuing court as soon as practicable but within one business day (Penal Code § 18115).
- (e) As soon as practicable, but by the end of his/her shift, submit proof of service to the Records Supervisor for prompt entry into the California Restraining and Protective Order System (Penal Code § 18115).

The deputy should also inform the restrained person that he/she is required, within 24 hours, to surrender to a law enforcement agency any other firearms and ammunition he/she owns or that are in his/her custody or control or sell them to a firearms dealer. This notification should be documented.

All firearms and ammunition collected shall be handled and booked in accordance with the Property and Evidence Policy.

### **390.4.1 SERVICE OF ORAL GUN VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS**

If a gun violence restraining order is obtained orally, the deputy shall (Penal Code § 18140):

- (a) Serve the order on the restrained person in the manner outlined above, if the restrained person can reasonably be located.
- (b) File a copy of the order with the court as soon as practicable after issuance.
- (c) Ensure the order is provided to the Records Division for entry into the computer database system for protective and restraining orders maintained by the Department of Justice.

### **390.5 SEARCH WARRANTS**

If a person who has been served with a gun violence restraining order refuses to surrender any firearm or ammunition, the deputy should consider whether to seek a search warrant. If a search warrant is to be obtained, the preparation and service of the search warrant shall be done in accordance with the Warrant Service Policy. Additionally, (Penal Code § 1542.5):

- (a) The deputy serving the warrant shall take custody of any firearm or ammunition that is controlled, possessed or owned by the person who is the subject of the gun violence restraining order, including any discovered pursuant to the warrant, a consensual search or other lawful search.
- (b) If the location being searched is jointly occupied and the firearm or ammunition is owned by a person other than the restrained person, the firearm or ammunition should not be seized if the following conditions are met:
  - 1. The firearm or ammunition can be stored in a manner that does not allow the restrained person to have control or access.
  - 2. There is no evidence that the owner unlawfully possesses the firearm or ammunition.
- (c) If a locked gun safe belonging to someone other than the subject of a gun violence restraining order is discovered, the deputy shall not search the contents of the safe unless the owner consents or there is a valid search warrant for the safe. Any search of the safe must be done in the owner's presence.

## *Gun Violence Restraining Orders*

---

### **390.6 RECORDS SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Records Supervisor is responsible for ensuring:

- (a) Proof of service of any gun violence restraining order served by a deputy or received from the clerk of the court is entered in the computer database system for protective and restraining orders maintained by the Department of Justice within one business day of service if served by a deputy, or within one business day of receipt of proof of service if served by a person other than a law enforcement officer (Penal Code § 18115).
- (b) Oral orders are entered into the California Restraining and Protective Order System (Penal Code § 18140).
- (c) Copies of receipts of surrendered firearms or ammunition issued by other agencies for gun violence restraining orders issued by the Department are properly maintained (Penal Code § 18120).

### **390.7 COURT-ORDERED FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SURRENDERS**

Authorized members shall accept firearms and ammunition from any individual who is the subject of a gun violence restraining order. The member receiving any firearm or ammunition shall:

- (a) Record the individual's name, address and telephone number.
- (b) Record the serial number of the firearm.
- (c) Prepare an incident report and property report.
- (d) Provide a property receipt to the individual who surrendered the firearms and ammunition.
- (e) Package and submit the firearms and ammunition in accordance with the Property and Evidence Policy.

### **390.8 RELEASE OF FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION**

Firearms and ammunition that were taken into temporary custody or surrendered pursuant to a gun violence restraining order shall be returned to the restrained person upon the expiration of the order and in accordance with Penal Code § 18120 and the Property and Evidence Policy.

# Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation

## 391.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended ensure the protection and security of ancient or historic grave sites, including notification of personnel responsible for cultural items, in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) (25 USC § 3001 et seq.).

### 391.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include (43 CFR 10.2):

**Funerary objects and associated funerary objects** - Objects that, as part of the death rite or ceremony of a culture, are reasonably believed to have been placed intentionally at the time of death or later with or near individual human remains, or that were made exclusively for burial purposes or to contain human remains.

**Native American human remains** - The physical remains of the body of a person of Native American ancestry.

**Objects of cultural patrimony** - Objects having ongoing historical, traditional or cultural importance that is central to the Native American group or culture itself and therefore cannot be appropriated or conveyed by any individual, including members of the Native American group or Native Hawaiian organization. Such objects must have been considered inalienable by the Native American group at the time the object was separated from the group.

**Sacred objects** - Specific ceremonial objects needed by traditional Native American religious leaders for the practice of traditional Native American religions.

## 391.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that the protection of Native American human remains, funerary objects, associated funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony is the responsibility of all members. Such protection includes minimizing destruction, contamination, inadvertent disruption or complicated custody transfer processes.

## 391.3 COMPLIANCE WITH THE NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES PROTECTION AND REPATRIATION ACT

Upon discovery or arrival upon a scene where it reasonably appears that a Native American grave, human remains, funerary objects, associated funerary objects, sacred objects or objects of cultural patrimony are exposed or otherwise unsecured, members shall secure the site in the same manner as a crime scene. All activity at the scene other than scene preservation activity must cease (43 CFR 10.4).

No photography or video recording may be permitted by the media or any group or individual who may wish to exhibit the remains.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation*

---

Without delay, the appropriate agency or group shall be notified to respond and take control of the scene. These include the following (43 CFR 10.4):

- Federal land - Appropriate agency at the U.S. Department of the Interior or U.S. Department of Agriculture
- State land/Private land - Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner , when appropriate (Health and Safety Code § 7050.5)
- Tribal land - Responsible Indian tribal official

### **391.4 EVIDENCE AND PROPERTY**

If the location has been investigated as a possible homicide scene prior to identification as a NAGPRA site, investigators shall work with other appropriate agencies and individuals to ensure the proper transfer and repatriation of any material collected. Members shall ensure that any remains or artifacts located at the site are expediently processed (43 CFR 10.6).

## Chapter 4 - Patrol Operations

## Patrol Function

### 400.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to define the patrol function and address intraorganizational cooperation and information sharing.

#### 400.1.1 TERRORISM

It is the goal of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to make every reasonable effort to accurately and appropriately gather and report any information that may relate to either foreign or domestic terrorism. As such, the Department has established the position of Terrorism Liaison Deputy who will be responsible for collecting and maintaining all information related to terrorism.

Any Department member receiving local Homeland Security or terrorism related information, through any method of communication, shall report it immediately to the Terrorism Liaison Officer (T.L.O.) electronically, by voice mail or in writing. The T.L.O. shall receive this information so that it may be relayed to the proper task force or agency, when appropriate. The purpose of this policy is to provide a county wide reporting mechanism for known suspected Homeland Security or terrorism-related activity, so the information may be investigated and acted upon in a timely manner.

#### 400.1.2 TERRORISM LIAISON OFFICER (T.L.O.)

The T.L.O. will act as the central contact point between this Department and the Office of Homeland Security and the Department of Homeland Security. Information exchanged by the T.L.O. should facilitate information sharing and multi-jurisdictional preemption of terrorism acts and events. Information related to Homeland Security and/or local terrorist related activity shall be relayed immediately to the Department's designated T.L.O.

This department will not conduct investigations of Homeland Security or terrorist related activity unless the T.L.O. is notified.

#### 400.1.3 REPORTING PROCEDURES

When a member of this Department receives local Homeland Security or terrorist related information shall provide the T.L.O. with all relevant information. The information should include but is not limited to:

A brief synopsis of the information obtained; All related events and/or case numbers; Source of information including contact information; and Any additional information to aid follow-up.

### 400.2 INFORMATION SHARING

To the extent feasible, all information relevant to the mission of the [Department/Office] should be shared among all divisions and specialized units on a timely basis. Members should be provided with opportunities on a regular basis to share information during the daily [briefing]s and to attend [briefing]s of other divisions or specialized units.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Patrol Function*

---

Additionally, information should be shared with outside agencies and the public in conformance with [department/office] policies and applicable laws. Members are encouraged to share information with other units and divisions.

#### 400.2.1 CRIME REPORTS

A crime report may be completed by any patrol deputy who receives criminal information. The report will be processed and forwarded to the appropriate bureau for retention or follow-up investigation. All reports will be completed at the end of the deputy's assigned work shift unless a supervisor authorizes the reports to be completed at another time.

#### 400.2.2 PATROL BRIEFINGS

Patrol supervisors, detective sergeants, and special unit sergeants are encouraged to share information as much as possible. All supervisors and/or deputies will be provided an opportunity to share information at the daily patrol briefings as time permits. Briefings will be conducted via video conferencing, when available. This shall include all stations and dispatch center. Deputies and dispatchers shall attend video conferencing briefing and be visible on screen when practical.

#### 400.2.3 INFORMATION CLIPBOARDS

Several information clipboards will be maintained in the area stations' patrol rooms and will be available for review by deputies from all divisions within the [department/office]. These will include, but not be limited to, the patrol check clipboard, the wanted persons clipboard and the written directive clipboard.

#### 400.2.4 BULLETIN BOARDS

A bulletin board will be kept in the patrol room and the Detective Unit for display of suspect information, intelligence reports and photographs. New Departmental Directives will be made available for patrol supervisors and will be discussed at [briefing]s and shift meetings. A copy of the Departmental Directive will be placed on the patrol room clipboard. All Departmental Directives will also be delivered to personnel through [department/office] email accounts.

#### 400.2.5 PATROL SCHEDULE

All supervisors shall use the on line patrol schedule. This schedule is located on the "X" drive in a file that is named with the current shift month duration and year. An example of the file name would be "Jan - May 2008 Schedule."

It is imperative that supervisors communicate with their peers regarding the schedule as to minimize lapses in coverage and mitigate the use of overtime. However, this policy does not preclude the use of overtime when needed due to circumstances that are obviously unforeseen.

Only supervisors are authorized to make changes within the schedule. Supervisors should focus on their assigned shifts first and coordinate with their peers for changes to other shifts they are not directly responsible.

## *Patrol Function*

---

### **400.3 CROWDS, EVENTS AND GATHERINGS**

Deputies may encounter gatherings of people, including but not limited to, civil demonstrations, civic, social and business events, public displays, parades and sporting events. Deputies should monitor such events as time permits in an effort to keep the peace and protect the safety and rights of those present. A patrol supervisor should be notified when it becomes reasonably foreseeable that such an event may require increased monitoring, contact or intervention.

Deputies responding to an event or gathering that warrants law enforcement involvement should carefully balance the speech and association rights of those present with applicable public safety concerns before taking enforcement action.

Generally, deputies should consider seeking compliance through advisements and warnings for minor violations and should reserve greater enforcement options for more serious violations or when voluntary compliance with the law is not achieved.

Deputies are encouraged to contact organizers or responsible persons to seek voluntary compliance that may address relevant public safety/order concerns.

Deputies should consider enforcement of applicable state and local laws, such as Penal Code 602.1 (obstructing or intimidating business operators), when the activity blocks the entrance or egress of a facility or location and when voluntary compliance with the law is not achieved.

### **400.4 POLICY**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office provides patrol services 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will prioritize responses to requests for emergency services using available resources to enhance the safety of the public and [department/office] members.

### **400.5 FUNCTION**

Patrol will generally be conducted by uniformed deputies in clearly marked law enforcement vehicles in assigned jurisdictional areas of Merced County Sheriff's Department. The function of patrol is to respond to calls for assistance and reports of criminal activity, act as a deterrent to crime, enforce state and local laws, identify community needs, provide support and assistance to the community and respond to emergencies.

Patrol services include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Responding to emergency calls for service.
- (b) Apprehending criminal offenders.
- (c) Providing mutual aid and assistance to other agencies for emergency and law enforcement-related activities.
- (d) Preventing criminal acts, traffic violations and collisions, maintaining public order and discovering hazardous situations or conditions.
- (e) Responding to reports of criminal and non-criminal acts.
- (f) Responding to routine calls for service, such as public assistance or public safety.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Patrol Function*

---

- (g) Carrying out crime prevention activities such as residential inspections, business inspections and community presentations.
- (h) Carrying out community oriented policing and problem-solving activities including the application of resources to improve or resolve specific problems or situations and contacting or assisting members of the public in a positive way.
- (i) Directing and controlling traffic.

## Bias-Based Policing

### 402.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance to [department/office] members that affirms the Merced County Sheriff's Office's commitment to policing that is fair and objective.

Nothing in this policy prohibits the use of specified characteristics in law enforcement activities designed to strengthen the [department/office]'s relationship with its diverse communities (e.g., cultural and ethnicity awareness training, youth programs, community group outreach, partnerships).

#### 402.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Bias-based policing** - An inappropriate reliance on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, economic status, age, cultural group, disability or affiliation with any non-criminal group (protected characteristics) as the basis for providing differing law enforcement service or enforcement (Penal Code § 13519.4).

### 402.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing law enforcement services to the community with due regard for the racial, cultural or other differences of those served. It is the policy of this [department/office] to provide law enforcement services and to enforce the law equally, fairly, objectively and without discrimination toward any individual or group.

### 402.3 BIAS-BASED POLICING PROHIBITED

Bias-based policing is strictly prohibited.

However, nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit a deputy from considering protected characteristics in combination with credible, timely and distinct information connecting a person or people of a specific characteristic to a specific unlawful incident, or to specific unlawful incidents, specific criminal patterns or specific schemes.

#### 402.3.1 CALIFORNIA RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT

Members shall not collect information from a person based on religious belief, practice, affiliation, national origin or ethnicity unless permitted under state or federal law (Government Code § 8310.3).

Members shall not assist federal government authorities (Government Code § 8310.3):

- (a) In compiling personal information about a person's religious belief, practice, affiliation, national origin or ethnicity.

## *Bias-Based Policing*

---

- (b) By investigating, enforcing or assisting with the investigation or enforcement of any requirement that a person register with the federal government based on religious belief, practice, or affiliation, or national origin or ethnicity.

### **402.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Every member of this [department/office] shall perform his/her duties in a fair and objective manner and is responsible for promptly reporting any suspected or known instances of bias-based policing to a supervisor. Members should, when reasonable to do so, intervene to prevent any biased-based actions by another member.

#### **402.4.1 REASON FOR CONTACT**

Deputies contacting a person shall be prepared to articulate sufficient reason for the contact, independent of the protected characteristics of the individual.

To the extent that written documentation would otherwise be completed (e.g., arrest report, field interview (FI) card), the involved deputy should include those facts giving rise to the contact, as applicable.

Except for required data-collection forms or methods, nothing in this policy shall require any deputy to document a contact that would not otherwise require reporting.

### **402.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Supervisors should monitor those individuals under their command for compliance with this policy and shall handle any alleged or observed violations in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.

- (a) Supervisors should discuss any issues with the involved deputy and his/her supervisor in a timely manner.
  - 1. Supervisors should document these discussions, in the prescribed manner.
- (b) Supervisors should periodically review Body Worn Camera recordings, portable audio/video recordings, Mobile Data Computer (MDC) data and any other available resource used to document contact between deputies and the public to ensure compliance with the policy.
  - 1. Supervisors should document these periodic reviews.
  - 2. Recordings or data that capture a potential instance of bias-based policing should be appropriately retained for administrative investigation purposes.
- (c) Supervisors shall initiate investigations of any actual or alleged violations of this policy.
- (d) Supervisors should take prompt and reasonable steps to address any retaliatory action taken against any member of this [department/office] who discloses information concerning bias-based policing.

## *Bias-Based Policing*

---

### **402.6 ADMINISTRATION**

Each year, a designated Operations Lieutenant shall review the efforts of the Department to prevent racial- or bias-based profiling and submit an overview, including public concerns and complaints, to the Sheriff.

The Undersheriff maintains all records regarding Administrative Investigations and complaints. The designated Operations Lieutenant shall work directly with the Undersheriff to identify reports and complaints that involve Racial or Bias Based profiling.

This report should not contain any identifying information regarding any specific complaint, member of the public or deputies. It should be reviewed by the Sheriff to identify any changes in training or operations that should be made to improve service.

Supervisors shall review the annual report and discuss the results with those they are assigned to supervise.

### **402.7 TRAINING**

Training on racial- or bias-based profiling and review of this policy should be conducted as directed by the Sheriff's Administration.

- (a) All sworn members of this department will be scheduled to attend Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-approved training on the subject of racial- or bias-based profiling.
- (b) Pending participation in such POST-approved training and at all times, all members of this department are encouraged to familiarize themselves with and consider racial and cultural differences among members of this community.
- (c) Each sworn member of this department who received initial racial- or bias-based profiling training will thereafter be required to complete an approved refresher course every five years, or sooner if deemed necessary, in order to keep current with changing racial, identity and cultural trends (Penal Code § 13519.4(i)).

### **402.8 REPORTING TO CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

The Undersheriff shall ensure that all data required by the California Department of Justice (DOJ) regarding complaints of racial bias against deputies is collected and provided to the Records Supervisor for required reporting to the DOJ (Penal Code § 13012; Penal Code § 13020). See the Records Division Policy.

## Briefing Training

### 404.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Briefing training is generally conducted at the beginning of the deputy's assigned shift. Briefing provides an opportunity for important exchange between employees and supervisors. A supervisor generally will conduct Briefing; however deputies may conduct Briefing for training purposes with supervisor approval.

Briefing should accomplish, at a minimum, the following basic tasks:

- (a) Briefing deputies with information regarding daily patrol activity, with particular attention given to unusual situations and changes in the status of wanted persons, stolen vehicles, and major investigations
- (b) Notifying deputies of changes in schedules and assignments
- (c) Notifying deputies of new Departmental Directives or changes in Departmental Directives
- (d) Reviewing recent incidents for training purposes
- (e) Providing training on a variety of subjects

### 404.2 PREPARATION OF MATERIALS

The supervisor conducting Briefing is responsible for preparation of the materials necessary for a constructive briefing. Supervisors may delegate this responsibility to a subordinate deputy in his or her absence or for training purposes.

#### 404.2.1 VIDEO CONFERENCE BRIEFING

All supervisors shall use the video conferencing system for briefing whenever available.

# Crime and Disaster Scene Integrity

## 406.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance in handling a major crime or disaster.

## 406.2 CRIME SCENE RESPONSIBILITY

The first deputy at the scene of a crime or major incident is generally responsible for taking reasonable efforts to preserve the scene. Deputies shall also consider officer safety and public safety, including reasonable efforts to render medical aid to any obviously injured parties. Once a deputy has assumed or been assigned to maintain the integrity of the crime/disaster scene, the deputy shall continue to do so until he/she is relieved by a supervisor.

### 406.2.1 FIRST RESPONDER CONSIDERATIONS

The following list generally describes the first responder's function at a crime or disaster scene. This list is not intended to be all-inclusive, is not necessarily in order and may be altered according to the demands of each situation:

- (a) Ensure no suspects are still within the area.
- (b) Broadcast emergency information including all requests for additional assistance.
- (c) Provide first aid to injured parties if it can be done safely.
- (d) Evacuate the location as needed.
- (e) Secure the inner and outer perimeters as needed.
- (f) Protect items of apparent evidentiary value.
- (g) Identify potential witnesses.
- (h) Start chronological log noting critical times and personnel allowed access.

### 406.2.2 EXECUTION OF HEALTH ORDERS

Any sworn member of this department is authorized to enforce all orders of the local health officer that have been issued for the purpose of preventing the spread of any contagious, infectious or communicable disease (Health and Safety Code § 120155).

## 406.3 SEARCHES AT CRIME OR DISASTER SCENES

Deputies arriving at crime or disaster scenes are often faced with the immediate need to search for and render aid to victims and determine if suspects are present and continue to pose a threat. Once deputies are satisfied that no additional suspects are present and/or there are no injured persons to be treated, those exigent circumstances will likely no longer exist. Deputies should thereafter secure the scene and conduct no further search until proper authority for the search is obtained.

## *Crime and Disaster Scene Integrity*

---

### **406.3.1 CONSENT**

Deputies should seek consent to search from authorized individuals where possible. However, in the case of serious crimes or major investigations, it may be prudent to obtain a search warrant. Consent should be sought even in cases where a search warrant has been granted.

### **406.4 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to secure crime or disaster scenes so that evidence is preserved, and to identify and mitigate the dangers associated with a major crime or disaster scene for the safety of the community and those required to enter or work near the scene.

### **406.5 EXECUTION OF HEALTH ORDERS**

Any sworn member of this department is authorized to enforce all orders of the local health officer that have been issued for the purpose of preventing the spread of any contagious, infectious or communicable disease (Health and Safety Code § 120155).

### **406.6 SEARCHES**

Deputies arriving at crime or disaster scenes are often faced with the immediate need to search for and render aid to victims, and to determine if suspects are present and continue to pose a threat. Once deputies are satisfied that no additional suspects are present and/or there are no injured persons to be treated, those exigent circumstances will likely no longer exist. Deputies should thereafter secure the scene and conduct no further search until additional or alternate authority for the search is obtained, such as consent or a search warrant.

## Tactical Support Unit (TSU)

### 407.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Merced County Sheriff's Office maintains a Tactical Support Unit. There are two areas of this unit; 1) Remotely Operated Vehicles (Robots, UAS/UAV's and associated vehicles; 2) Command Post and associated vehicles. The TSU is responsible for all tactical remote controlled robot equipment and Command Post related equipment.

The Tactical Support Unit (TSU) primarily exists to assist the SWAT team operations and other tactically oriented or Search and Rescue missions. The unit has been established to provide specialized support in handling critical field operations where tactical or negotiation operations are deployed. TSU may be activated in support of patrol or other designated events as directed by the Operations Captain.

The Command Post is designed to support any department function at the direction of the Sheriff or Command Staff.

### 407.2 TACTICAL SUPPORT UNIT/COMMAND POST UNIT SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Any sworn or non sworn member of the department, who is off probation, shall submit a letter of interest to the Sheriff's Secretary. This letter will be forwarded to the SWAT Commander, TSU Sergeant, and TSU Manager for review.

Recommended Qualifications:

1. Recommendation by immediate supervisor
2. Satisfactory evaluations for the past evaluation year or last documented evaluation
3. Experience in the operation NIMS/SEMS or Incident Command System
4. Experience in the operation of mechanical equipment, computers and communication equipment
5. Able to maintain to complete crime reports and records
6. Ability to work in a team environment
7. Ability to be motivated, dependable and able to prioritize and complete projects in a timely manner
8. Available for on-call status

Upon receipt of a letter of interest, a recommendation will be made by the TSU Sergeant and TSU Manager to the SWAT Commander for appointment of personnel.

## SWAT

### 408.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) Team was established to provide a skilled and trained team which may be deployed during events requiring specialized tactics in such situations as cases where suspects have taken hostages and/or barricaded themselves as well as prolonged or predictable situations in which persons armed or suspected of being armed pose a danger to themselves or others. The SWAT Team is comprised of three specialized teams: the Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT), the Special Weapons and Tactics Team (SWAT), and the Tactical Support Team. The unit has been established to provide specialized support in handling critical field operations where intense negotiations and/or special tactical deployment methods beyond the capacity of field deputies appear to be necessary. This policy is written to comply with the guidelines established in the Attorney General's Commission on Special Weapons and Tactics Report (September 2002) and the POST 2005 SWAT Operational Guidelines and Standardized Training Recommendations (Penal Code § 13514.1).

### 408.2 SWAT TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

#### 408.2.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel who are off probation shall submit a letter of interest to the SWAT Team Captain/Team Commander. Those qualifying applicants will then be invited to participate in the testing process. The order of the tests will be given at the discretion of the SWAT Captain. The testing process will consist of an oral interview, physical agility test, SWAT basic handgun test, and team evaluation.

- (a) Oral board: The oral board will consist of personnel selected by the SWAT Captain. Applicants will be evaluated by the following criteria:
  - 1. Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance;
  - 2. Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of critical role of SWAT member;
  - 3. Special skills, training, or appropriate education as it pertains to this assignment; and,
  - 4. Commitment to the unit, realizing that the additional assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions, and training obligations.
  - 5. Professional and competent abilities as a peace officer in their current assignment.
  - 6. Willingness for on-call availability

## SWAT

---

- (b) Physical agility: The physical agility test is designed to determine the physical capabilities of the applicant as it relates to performance of SWAT-related duties. The test and scoring procedure will be established by the SWAT Captain. A minimum qualifying score shall be attained by the applicant to be considered for the position.
- (c) SWAT basic handgun: Candidates will be invited to shoot the SWAT Basic Drill for the handgun. A minimum qualifying score of 240 out of a possible score of 300 must be attained to qualify.
- (d) Team evaluation: Current team members will evaluate each candidate on his or her field tactical skills, teamwork, ability to work under stress, communication skills, judgment, ability to understand and implement complex instructions under stress and any special skills that could benefit the team.
- (e) A list of successful applicants shall be submitted to the Undersheriff by the SWAT Captain for final selection.

### **408.3 OPERATION GUIDELINES FOR CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT**

The following procedures serve as guidelines for the operational deployment of the SWAT Team. Generally, the Special Weapons and Tactics Team, the Crisis Negotiations Team, and the Tactical Support Unit will be activated together. It is recognized, however, that a tactical team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the Crisis Negotiations Team or the Tactical Support Unit such as warrant service operations. This shall be at the discretion of the SWAT Captain.

#### **408.3.1 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION**

The supervisor in charge on the scene of a particular event will assess whether the SWAT Team is to respond to the scene. Upon final determination by SWAT Captain, he/she will notify the Sheriff. The on-scene supervisor shall complete the departmental Search/Arrest Matrix form to assist SWAT for decision-making purposes.

#### **408.3.2 APPROPRIATE SITUATIONS FOR USE OF SWAT**

The following are examples of incidents which may result in the activation of the SWAT Team:

- Barricaded suspects who refuse an order to surrender.
- Incidents where hostages are taken.
- Cases of suicide threats.
- Arrests of dangerous persons.
- Any situation that could enhance the ability to preserve life, maintain social order, and ensure the protection of property.

## SWAT

---

Requests for SWAT resources based on the team's ability to be activated quickly and its specialized skills may be approved to support a law enforcement event. Each request will be evaluated on a case by case basis with the SWAT Captain and the Sheriff or his designee prior to deployment.

### 408.3.3 OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS

Requests by field personnel for assistance from outside agency crisis units must be approved by the SWAT Captain. Deployment of the Merced County Sheriff's Office SWAT Team in response to requests by other agencies must be authorized by the SWAT Captain. The SWAT Captain will confer with the Sheriff or his designee before deployment.

### 408.3.4 MOBILIZATION OF SWAT

The on-scene supervisor shall make a request to the SWAT Captain for the SWAT Team. The SWAT Captain shall then notify the Sheriff. If the SWAT Captain is unavailable, the SWAT Lieutenant or a SWAT team supervisor shall be notified. A current mobilization list shall be maintained by Dispatch.

The on-scene supervisor shall complete a SWAT Search Warrant/Threat Matrix to support his/her decision to activate the SWAT Team. In the event that the on-scene supervisor cannot complete this document, he/she will complete it at his/her first opportunity. The on-scene supervisor should advise the SWAT Captain with as much of the following information which is available at the time:

- (a) The number of suspects, known weapons and resources.
- (b) If the suspect is in control of hostages.
- (c) If the suspect is barricaded.
- (d) The type of crime involved.
- (e) If the suspect has threatened or attempted suicide.
- (f) The location of the command post and a safe approach to it.
- (g) The extent of any perimeter and the number of deputies involved.
- (h) Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation and whether the suspect has refused an order to surrender.

The SWAT Captain shall then initiate a call-out for the SWAT Team to respond. In the absence of the SWAT Captain, the SWAT Lieutenant may activate the team. In the absence of the SWAT Lieutenant, a SWAT Sergeant may activate the team.

### 408.3.5 FIELD UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

While waiting for the Crisis Negotiations Team, field personnel should, if safe, practical and sufficient resources exist:

## SWAT

---

- (a) Establish an inner and outer perimeter.
- (b) Establish a command post outside of the inner perimeter.
- (c) Establish an arrest/response team. The team actions may include:
  - 1. Securing any subject or suspect who may surrender.
  - 2. Taking action to mitigate a deadly threat or behavior.
- (d) Evacuate any injured persons or citizens in the zone of danger.
- (e) Attempt to establish preliminary communication with the suspect. Once the Crisis Negotiations Team (CNT) has arrived, all negotiations should generally be halted to allow the negotiators and SWAT time to set up.
- (f) Be prepared to brief the SWAT Sergeant or CNT Sergeant on the situation.
- (g) Plan for, and stage, anticipated resources.

### 408.3.6 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival of the SWAT Team at the scene, the on-scene supervisor shall brief the SWAT Captain, SWAT Tactical Commander, and team supervisors about the situation. Upon review, a decision then will be made whether to deploy the SWAT Team. Once deployment is authorized, the SWAT Tactical Commander will be responsible for the tactical portion of the operation. The Incident Commander, generally the SWAT Captain, shall continue supervision of the command post operation, outer perimeter security, and support for the SWAT Team. The Incident Commander and the SWAT Tactical Commander (or his or her designee) shall maintain communications at all times.

### 408.3.7 COMMUNICATION WITH CRISIS RESPONSE UNIT PERSONNEL

All of those persons who are non-SWAT Team personnel should refrain from any non-emergency contact or interference with any member of the team during active negotiations. Operations require the utmost in concentration by involved personnel and, as a result, no one should interrupt or communicate with Crisis Negotiations Team personnel directly. All non-emergency communications shall be channeled through the Crisis Negotiations Team Sergeant or his or her designee.

### 408.3.8 OPERATIONAL READINESS INSPECTIONS

The SWAT Captain shall appoint a designated SWAT Sergeant to perform operational readiness inspections of all unit equipment monthly. The result of the inspection will be forwarded to the SWAT Lieutenant and Captain. The inspection will include equipment issued to members of the unit, operational equipment maintained at SWAT headquarters and equipment maintained or used in SWAT vehicles.

## Dive Team

### **409.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The Dive Team is comprised of specialized teams consisting of the Dive Team members and the Surface Support Team. The unit has been established to provide specialized support in handling all water related field operations, and where the advanced training of the unit is required.

#### **409.1.1 OPERATIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY**

The Policy Manual sections pertaining to the Dive Team are divided into Administrative and Operational Policy and Procedures. Since situations that necessitate the need for such a response vary greatly from incident to incident and such events often demand on-the-scene evaluation, the Operational Policy outlined in this manual section serves as a guideline to Team personnel allowing for appropriate on-the-scene decision-making as required. The Administrative Procedures, however, are more restrictive and few exceptions should be taken.

### **409.2 MANAGEMENT/SUPERVISION OF DIVE TEAM**

The Water Rescue and Recovery Team shall be managed by the Operations Captain.

#### **409.2.1 PRIMARY UNIT MANAGER**

The Water Rescue and Recovery Team shall be managed by a Lieutenant. The Lieutenant will report to the Operations Captain. The Lieutenant will have designated supervisors who report to him with regard to supervision and management of the Dive Team.

#### **409.2.2 TEAM SUPERVISORS**

The Dive team and the Surface Support team shall be supervised by Team leaders appointed by the Dive Team Lieutenant. The following represents the team leader responsibilities for the Dive Team.

- (a) The Dive Team leaders primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the Dive team which will include deployment, training, first line participation and other duties as directed by the Dive Team Lieutenant.
- (b) The Surface Support team leader's primary responsibility is to supervise the operations of the Surface support team which will include deployment, training, first line participation, and other duties as directed by the Dive Team Lieutenant.

### **409.3 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL FOR DIVE TEAM MEMBERSHIP**

Any person employed by the Sheriff's Department or Allied agency may become a member of the Diver Team, provided he/she meets the minimum qualifications for membership. Interested Sheriff Department and Allied agency personnel shall submit a letter of interest request to the Dive Team Lieutenant who will forward the request to the Operations Captain. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the Dive Team Lieutenant and Dive Team personnel.

## *Dive Team*

---

The Sheriff's Department will review the qualifications of the applicant and will solely determine eligibility for membership in accordance with the established selection procedures. These qualifications include but are not limited to minimum standards set by the Dive Team Lieutenant. Once qualified and approved for membership, applicants will be considered members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office Dive Team. All Dive Team members serve at the pleasure of the Sheriff. The decision whether to remove a Dive Team member shall be made solely at the discretion of the Sheriff in accordance with established removal procedures.

### 409.3.1 SURFACE SUPPORT TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

The Surface Support Team has been established to provide skilled support in the maintenance of equipment, operation of surface based life support for divers, dive tending, communication with divers, coordination of missions, use of specialized equipment to support dive missions, and first aid for dive team members. The following procedures serve as directives for the administrative operation of the Surface Support Team.

### 409.3.2 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL FOR SURFACE SUPPORT TEAM

Interested Sheriff Department and allied agency personnel shall submit a letter of interest request to his/her supervisor. A copy will be forwarded to the Dive Team Lieutenant. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the Dive Team Lieutenant and Dive Team personnel. Interested personnel shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- (a) Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance;
- (b) Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of the critical role of a Surface Support team member;
- (c) Special skills, training, or appropriate education as it pertains to the assignment;
- (d) Ability to be trained in the specialized field of Surface Support member;
- (e) Commitment to the unit, realizing that the assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions, and training obligations.

The oral board shall submit a list of successful applicants to staff for final selection.

### 409.3.3 TRAINING OF SURFACE SUPPORT MEMBERS

Those persons selected as members of the Surface Support Team should attend specialized training as soon as reasonably possible. Untrained members should be used in a training capacity. Additional training will be coordinated by the team supervisor.

Trainings will be conducted bi-monthly and will coincide with the Dive Team trainings. Though the need may arise to conduct separate trainings, the member shall attend a minimum of four trainings per one year period in order to maintain proficient training and mission readiness. Continual evaluation of a team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit shall be conducted by the team supervisor. Performance and efficiency levels, established by the team supervisor, will be met and maintained by all team members. Any member

## *Dive Team*

---

of the Surface Support Team who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory shall be dismissed from the unit.

### **409.4 DIVE TEAM ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

The Water Rescue and Recovery Team was established to provide a skilled and trained team to be deployed in all events requiring specialized training in dealing with water; for example, in such situations as cases where:

- (a) A water rescue attempt is warranted;
- (b) A person has drowned and needs to be recovered;
- (c) Search and recovery of criminal evidence;
- (d) Criminal investigations;
- (e) All related calls for service;
- (f) Assist and support allied agencies as needed;

#### **409.4.1 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL FOR THE DIVE TEAM**

Any person employed by the Sheriff's Department or allied agency may become a member of the Merced County Sheriff's Office Dive Team. Interested personnel shall submit a letter of interest request to his/her supervisor, a copy of which will be forwarded to the Dive Team Lieutenant. Those qualifying applicants will then be invited to participate in the testing process. The order of the tests will be given at the discretion of the Dive Team Lieutenant. The testing process will consist of an oral board, medical examination, physical performance swim testing, and ability to equalize body cavities at prescribed depths.

- (a) Oral board: The oral board will consist of personnel selected by the Dive Team Lieutenant. Applicants will be evaluated by the following criteria:
  - 1. Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance;
  - 2. Demonstrated good judgment and understanding of critical role of Water Rescue and Recovery Team member;
  - 3. Special skills, training, and/or ability to be trained as it pertains to this assignment; and,
  - 4. Commitment to the unit, realizing that the additional assignment may necessitate unusual working hours, conditions, and training obligations.
- (b) Medical examination: The medical examination will consist of a basic scuba divers physical performed by a board certified physician. Applicants will need to provide a medical history to the physician.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Dive Team*

---

- (c) Physical performance testing:
  - 1. 200 yards of continuous swimming while demonstrating various swim strokes;
  - 2. 25 yards of continuous underwater swimming without surfacing;
  - 3. 50 yards of swimming with a 10 pound weight belt
  - 4. 10 minute tread
  - 5. 30 second tread using legs only
  - 6. 1000 meter open water swim utilizing mask, snorkel, fins, and wet or dry suit.
- (d) Ability to equalize body cavities at hyperbaric depth of 100 feet of water:
  - 1. Placement in hyperbaric chamber;
  - 2. Actual submersion to depth of 100 feet of water;
- (e) Team evaluation: Current team members will evaluate each candidate on his or her practical skills, teamwork, ability to work under stress, judgment, and any special skills that could benefit the team.
- (f) A list of successful applicants shall be submitted to staff, by the Dive Team Lieutenant, for final selection.

#### 409.4.2 DIVE TEAM TRAINING

Training shall be coordinated by the Dive Team Leader. In addition to specialized training, the Dive Team Leader may conduct monthly training exercises, to include a review and critique of personnel and their performance in the exercise. Training shall consist of the following:

- (a) Training will be conducted on a monthly basis. Training will consist of practical application. Each member shall attend a minimum of four trainings per one year period in order to maintain proficient training and mission readiness
- (b) Each Dive Team member shall perform a physical fitness test yearly. Minimum standards must be attained by each team member.
- (c) Any Dive Team member failing to attain the minimum physical fitness qualification will be notified of the requirement to retest within 60 days of the previous physical fitness test date. The Dive Team member required to qualify shall report to a team supervisor and complete the sub standard physical performance test. Failure to qualify after a second attempt may result in dismissal from the team.
- (d) Those persons who are on vacation, ill, or are on light duty status with a doctor's note of approval on the test date shall be responsible for reporting to a Team Leader to retest upon their return to regular duty. Any member, who fails to arrange for and perform

## *Dive Team*

---

the physical fitness test within the 60-day period, shall be considered as having failed to qualify for that test period.

### **409.4.3 TEAM EVALUATION**

Continual evaluation of a Dive Team member's performance and efficiency as it relates to the positive operation of the unit shall be conducted by the Dive Team Lieutenant. The performance and efficiency level, as established by the Dive Team Lieutenant, will be met and maintained by all Dive Team members. Any member of the Dive Team who performs or functions at a level less than satisfactory may result in dismissal from the team.

### **409.5 OPERATION GUIDELINES FOR THE DIVE TEAM**

The following procedures serve as guidelines for the operational deployment of the Dive Team. Generally, the Dive Team and the Surface Support Team will be activated together. It is recognized, however, that the Dive Team may be used in a situation not requiring the physical presence of the Surface Support Team. This shall be at the discretion of the Dive Team Lieutenant or in his/her absence, the Dive Team Sergeant.

The Dive Team will follow all policies set forth by the Merced County Sheriff's Department and the operational guidelines of Dive Team.

#### **409.5.1 ON-SCENE DETERMINATION**

The supervisor in charge on the scene of a particular event will assess whether the Dive Team may be needed. Upon that determination by the supervisor in charge, he/she will notify the Dive Team Lieutenant. The Dive Team Captain will also be notified prior to any activation. The Dive Team Captain will then notify the Sheriff and Undersheriff.

#### **409.5.2 APPROPRIATE SITUATIONS FOR THE DIVE TEAM**

The following are incidents that may indicate the need for activation of the Dive Team:

- (a) A water rescue attempt is warranted;
- (b) A person has drowned and needs to be recovered;
- (c) Search and recovery of criminal evidence;
- (d) Criminal investigations;
- (e) All related calls for service;
- (f) Assist and support allied agencies as needed.

#### **409.5.3 OUTSIDE AGENCY REQUESTS**

Requests by other agencies for the Merced County Sheriff's Office Water Rescue and Recovery Team must be authorized by the Dive Team Captain. The Dive Team Captain will seek authorization from the Sheriff or his designee.

## *Dive Team*

---

### 409.5.4 MOBILIZATION OF DIVE TEAM

The on-scene supervisor shall make a request to the Dive Team Lieutenant for the Dive Team. The Dive Team Lieutenant shall then notify the Dive Team Captain. A mobilization list shall be maintained in the Dispatch Center. The on-scene supervisor should advise the Dive Team Lieutenant as follows:

- (a) Details of the incident;
- (b) Who is in charge of the scene;
- (c) The location of the command post and a safe approach to it;
- (d) Any other important facts critical to the immediate situation;

The Dive Team Lieutenant or designee shall then notify dispatch to call selected personnel to respond.

### 409.5.5 FIELD UNIT RESPONSIBILITIES

While waiting for the Dive Team, field personnel should, if safe and practical:

- (a) Establish the location the victim was last seen;
- (b) Establish a location for the command post;
- (c) Evacuate any injured persons or citizens in the zone of danger;
- (d) Be prepared to brief the Dive Team Lieutenant/Sergeant on situation; and
- (e) Plan for, and stage, anticipated resources.

### 409.5.6 ON-SCENE COMMAND RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon arrival of the Dive Team at the scene, the Dive Team Lieutenant will be responsible for the operational portion of the incident.

## Ride-Along Policy

### 410.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Ride-Along Program provides an opportunity for citizens to experience the law enforcement function first hand. This policy provides the requirements, approval process, and hours of operation for the Ride-Along Program.

#### 410.1.1 ELIGIBILITY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office Ride-Along Program is offered to residents, students and those employed within the County. Every attempt will be made to accommodate interested persons however any applicant may be disqualified without cause.

The following factors may be considered in disqualifying an applicant and are not limited to:

- Being under 15 years of age
- Prior criminal history
- Pending criminal action
- Pending lawsuit against the Department
- Denial by any supervisor

#### 410.1.2 AVAILABILITY

The Ride-Along Program is available daily at all times, with certain exceptions.

### 410.2 PROCEDURE TO REQUEST A RIDE-ALONG

Generally, ride-along requests will be approved by the appropriate supervisor. The swing shift supervisor will schedule the ride alongs. The participant will complete a ride-along waiver form. Information requested will include a valid ID or California driver's license, address, and telephone number. If the participant is under 18 years of age, a parent/guardian must be present to complete the Ride-Along Form.

A designated sergeant will schedule a date, based on availability, at least one week after the date of application.

If the ride-along is denied after the request has been made, a representative of the Department will contact the applicant and advise him/her of the denial.

#### 410.2.1 PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Once approved, civilian ride-alongs will be allowed to ride no more than once every six months. An exception would apply to the following: Explorers, Volunteers, Volunteer Chaplains, Reserves, Sheriff's applicants, and all others with approval of the appropriate supervisor.

An effort will be made to ensure that no more than one citizen will participate in a ride-along during any given time period. Normally, no more than one ride-along will be allowed in the deputy's vehicle at a given time.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Ride-Along Policy*

---

#### 410.2.2 SUITABLE ATTIRE

Any person approved to ride along is required to be suitably dressed in collared shirt, blouse or jacket, slacks and shoes. Sandals, T-shirts, tank tops, shorts and ripped or torn blue jeans are not permitted. Hats and ball caps will not be worn in the sheriff's vehicle. A field supervisor may refuse a ride along to anyone not properly dressed.

#### 410.2.3 PEACE OFFICER RIDE-ALONG

Off-duty members of this department or any other law enforcement agency will not be permitted to ride-along with on-duty deputies without the approval of the Operations Captain. In the event that such a ride-along is permitted, the off-duty employee shall not be considered on-duty and shall not represent themselves as a peace officer or participate in any law enforcement activity except as emergency circumstances may require.

#### 410.2.4 RIDE-ALONG CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK

All Ride-along applicants are subject to a criminal history check. The criminal history check may include a local records check and a Department of Justice Automated Criminal History System check through CLETS prior to their approval as a ride-along with a law enforcement officer (provided that the ride-along is not an employee of the Merced County Sheriff's Office) (CLETS Policies, Practices and Procedures Manual § 1.6.1.F.2.).

### 410.3 DEPUTY'S RESPONSIBILITY

The deputy shall advise the dispatcher that a ride-along is present in the vehicle before going into service. Deputies shall consider the safety of the ride-along at all times. Deputies should use sound discretion when encountering a potentially dangerous situation, and if feasible, let the participant out of the vehicle in a well-lighted place of safety. The dispatcher will be advised of the situation and as soon as practical have another sheriff's unit respond to pick up the participant at that location. The ride-along may be continued or terminated at this time.

The Operations Captain or designee is responsible for maintaining and scheduling ride-alongs. Upon completion of the ride-along, the yellow form shall be returned to the Operations Captain or designee with any comments which may be offered by the deputy.

### 410.4 CONTROL OF RIDE-ALONG

The assigned employee shall maintain control over the ride-along at all times and instruct him/her in the conditions that necessarily limit their participation. These instructions should include:

- (a) The ride-along will follow the directions of the deputy
- (b) The ride-along will not become involved in any investigation, handling of evidence, discussions with victims or suspects, or handling any sheriff's equipment
- (c) The ride-along may terminate the ride at any time and the deputy may return the observer to their home or to the station if the ride-along interferes with the performance of the deputy's duties

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Ride-Along Policy*

---

- (d) Ride-alongs may be allowed to continue riding during the transportation and booking process provided this does not jeopardize their safety
- (e) Deputies will not allow any ride-alongs to be present in any residences or situations that would jeopardize their safety or cause undue stress or embarrassment to a victim or any other citizen
- (f) Under no circumstance shall a civilian ride along be permitted to enter a private residence with a deputy without the expressed consent of the resident or other authorized person

## Aviation Unit

### 411.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This general order presents a consolidation of information, procedures, rules and guidelines for the operation of the Merced County Sheriff's Department Aviation Unit. It complements existing Department Procedures and Policies, Manufacturer's Flight Manuals, Federal Aviation Regulations, and other pertinent information relating to flight operations.

While it provides the best possible operating instructions under most conditions, it is not a substitute for sound judgment.

#### 411.1.1 UNIT FUNCTION

Fixed wing or rotor wing aircraft will be used in direct support of patrol operations, surveillance activities, and transportation. The Aviation Unit is responsible for, but not limited to:

- A. Providing air support to patrol operations.
- B. Providing the following special air support functions to units of the department for the accomplishment of their missions:
  - 1. Providing surveillance for investigative units.
  - 2. Flying photographic missions as required for gathering evidence, planning, critiquing, and surveying.
  - 3. Transportation of prisoners, detectives and other department personnel when appropriate.
  - 4. Providing aerial security of V.I.P. and foreign dignitaries as required.
  - 6. Search for lost or stranded persons and / or suspects; and any other missions deemed necessary by the Sheriff or Operations Captain .
- C. Providing assistance to incident commanders during unusual occurrences and special events.
- D. Members of the Aviation Unit must be assigned to the Operations Division.

#### 411.1.2 AVIATION UNIT MEMBER SELECTION

##### PILOT SELECTION

The following are the minimum qualifications for applicants to the Aviation Unit:

- A. Deputy Sheriff Coroner with the Merced County Sheriff's Department with at least two years of uniformed patrol experience with the department.
- B. Satisfactory (meets standards) performance evaluations for the past two years.
- C. Supervisor recommendation
- D. Possess a FAA Private Pilot Certificate for single engine airplane and/or helicopter with a minimum of 250 hours total of flight time.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Aviation Unit

---

- E. Possess a current FAA Class III medical certificate.
- F. May have prior experience as a TFO in the Merced County Sheriff's Office Aviation Unit.
- G. Civilian/Volunteer Pilots possess a FAA Private Pilot Certificate for single engine airplane and/or helicopter with a minimum of 250 hours total of flight time and a current FAA Class III medical certificate.

#### TACTICAL FLIGHT OFFICER (TFO) SELECTION

- A. Deputy Sheriff Coroner with the Merced County Sheriff's Department with at least two years of uniformed patrol experience with the department.
- B. Satisfactory (meets standards) performance evaluations for the past two years.
- C. Supervisor recommendation
- D. Ability to decisively communicate and perform multiple tasks in the dynamic, focused environment of an aircraft.
- E. Aviation experience is not required.

#### 411.1.3 UNIT POLICIES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES COMMON TO AIRCRAFT OPERATIONS CREW CONDUCT

- A. All Aviation Unit personnel will conduct themselves in a professional and safety-conscious manner. Safety is the first consideration in all operations.
- B. Operations will be conducted in accordance with existing Department Policies, Federal Aviation Regulations, the aircraft manufacturer's operating manual, procedures outlined in this manual, and / or public law when applicable.

#### PILOT'S LICENSE / MEDICAL CERTIFICATE

- A. It is each pilot's responsibility to maintain a current Private Pilot's License or greater and Class III medical certificate in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations.
- B. Copies of certificates must be presented to the unit training pilot and kept on file in the deputy's training file in the Aviation Unit office.

#### FLIGHT SAFETY

- A. Unit flights will be performed in a manner deemed to be safe by the Pilot in Command and the Unit Commander.

# Hazardous Material Response

## 412.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Hazardous materials present a potential harm to employees resulting from their exposure. To comply with Title 8, California Code of Regulations, § 5194, the following is to be the policy of this department.

### 412.1.1 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL DEFINED

A hazardous material is a substance which by its nature, containment and reactivity, has the capability of inflicting harm during exposure; characterized as being toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, an irritant or strong sensitizer and thereby posing a threat to health when improperly managed.

### 412.1.2 TECHNICAL INFORMATION RESOURCES

the following informational resources are available in hard copy form and maintained with the Department's High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area unit (HIDTA):

1) The Cal OSHA Health and Safety Manual for Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Teams. The Cal OSHA Manual details compliance standards for required OSHA programs and regulatory codes. 2) The Clandestine Laboratory Manual of Instruction and Procedure for Clandestine laboratory Responses and Investigations for Clandestine Laboratory Enforcement Teams. ( CLIMP manual ). The Clandestine Laboratory Manual of Instruction and Procedure or ( CLIMP Manual ) is the general safety plan for clandestine laboratory responses, including tasks, duties, responsibilities, personnel protective equipment, evaluations and safe investigative procedures specifically for the assigned Clandestine Lab Enforcement Teams and/or personnel.

## 412.2 HAZARDOUS MATERIAL RESPONSE

Employees may encounter situations involving suspected hazardous materials, such as at the scene of a traffic accident, chemical spill or fire. When employees come into contact with a suspected hazardous material, certain steps should be taken to protect themselves and citizens.

The following steps should be considered at any scene involving suspected hazardous materials:

- (a) Attempt to identify the type of hazardous substance. (Identification can be determined by placard, driver's manifest or statements from the person transporting).
- (b) Notify the Fire Department.
- (c) Provide first-aid for injured parties if it can be done safely and without contamination.
- (d) Begin evacuation of the immediate area and surrounding areas, depending on the substance. Voluntary evacuation should be considered; however, depending on the substance, mandatory evacuation may be necessary.
- (e) Notify the local health authority. Such notification is mandatory when a spilled or released item is a pesticide (Health and Safety Code § 105215).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Hazardous Material Response*

---

- (f) Notify the Department of Toxic Substances Control. This is mandatory when a deputy comes in contact with, or is aware of, the presence of a suspected hazardous substance at a site where an illegal controlled substance is or was manufactured (Health and Safety § 25354.5).

#### **412.3 REPORTING EXPOSURE(S)**

Department personnel who believe that they have been exposed to a hazardous material shall immediately report the exposure to a supervisor. Each exposure shall be documented by the employee in an employee memorandum that shall be forwarded via chain of command to the Commanding Officer. Should the affected employee be unable to document the exposure for any reason, it shall be the responsibility of the notified supervisor to complete the memorandum.

Injury or illness caused or believed to be caused from exposure to hazardous materials shall be reported the same as any other on-duty injury or illness in addition to a crime report or incident report.

##### **412.3.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

When a supervisor has been informed that an employee has been exposed to a hazardous material, he/she shall ensure that immediate medical treatment is obtained and appropriate action is taken to lessen the exposure.

To ensure the safety of employees, safety equipment is available through supervisory personnel. Safety items not maintained by the Department will be obtained through the Fire Department.

##### **412.3.2 METHAMPHETAMINE LABORATORIES AND LABORATORY DUMP SITES**

To ensure the appropriate reporting and response process by investigators and to minimize the time spent at these locations by patrol staff, the HIDTA supervisor will be notified of all and respond to reports of suspected methamphetamine laboratory locations and methamphetamine laboratory dump sites located in the county.

The HIDTA supervisor should be contacted by either the dispatch center or responding patrol staff. Following contact, HIDTA will either respond to or arrange for the response of Clan Lab certified personnel to those reported locations. HIDTA or Clan Lab personnel will be responsible for processing the locations for evidentiary items, making all the appropriate required notifications and completing both the investigative reports and the WSIN clandestine lab card. HIDTA will submit, track, and maintain all the required state and federal statistics regarding methamphetamine laboratories and laboratory dump sites occurring in Merced County. Patrol staff will no longer need to complete a WSIN clan lab card at these incidents or locations.

Manufacturers of methamphetamine typically dispose of methamphetamine laboratory waste and debris in the rural and agricultural areas throughout the county in the late night and early morning hours. The waste and debris are commonly disposed of inside black plastic garbage bags, buckets, assorted types of containers, and compressed gas cylinders. Patrol deputies responding to suspected dump sites should not handle any items or open any containers at these locations.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Hazardous Material Response*

---

Methamphetamine laboratory waste contains chemicals and chemical vapors that are acidic, caustic, and flammable. These chemical mixtures, if inhaled, can render a person unconscious and cause severe respiratory chemical burns.

When a methamphetamine laboratory dump site is reported to the dispatch center, the dispatcher should obtain the reporting party's contact information, the location of the dump site, and a brief description of the items present. If the dump site is determined not to be a roadway hazard or in a location that poses no immediate risk to the community, HIDTA will be notified for a response and a patrol deputy need not respond.

When a patrol deputy is at the location of a methamphetamine laboratory dump site, the deputy will tape off the dump site location with yellow crime scene tape, obtain a brief description of the items present and notify HIDTA for a response. If the dump site is determined not to be a roadway hazard or in a location that poses no immediate risk to the community, the deputy may leave the scene after HIDTA has been notified. When a methamphetamine laboratory dump site is reported and/or located, and the dump site is determined to be a roadway hazard or an immediate risk to the community, a deputy will respond to the location, obtain a brief description of the items present, and secure the dump site with yellow crime scene tape. HIDTA will be notified for a response. The patrol deputy will remain at the dump site until the arrival of HIDTA or other meth lab certified personnel. After the arrival of investigators to the location, the patrol deputy can leave the scene.

## Hostage and Barricade Incidents

### 414.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for situations where deputies have legal cause to contact, detain or arrest a person, and the person refuses to submit to the lawful requests of the deputies by remaining in a structure or vehicle and/or by taking a hostage.

The scope of this policy is not intended to address all variables that deputies encounter during their initial response or when a hostage or barricade situation has developed. This policy does not require or purport to recommend specific strategies or tactics for resolution as each incident is a dynamic and rapidly evolving event.

#### 414.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Barricade situation** - An incident where a person maintains a position of cover or concealment and ignores or resists law enforcement personnel, and it is reasonable to believe the subject is armed with a dangerous or deadly weapon.

**Hostage situation** - An incident where it is reasonable to believe a person is unlawfully held by a hostage-taker as security so that specified terms or conditions will be met.

#### 414.1.2 MANDATORY ACTIVATION OF SWAT

When a Hostage/Barricade situation has been determined, the Merced County Sheriff's Department Regional SWAT team will at the minimum, be activated. It is better to activate the team to respond to hostage/barricade situation and cancel them while enroute rather than prolong their response to these dynamic and potentially violent encounters.

### 414.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to address hostage and barricade situations with due regard for the preservation of life and balancing the risk of injury, while obtaining the safe release of hostages, apprehending offenders and securing available evidence.

### 414.3 COMMUNICATION

When circumstances permit, initial responding deputies should try to establish and maintain lines of communication with a barricaded person or hostage-taker. Deputies should attempt to identify any additional subjects, inquire about victims and injuries, seek the release of hostages, gather intelligence information, identify time-sensitive demands or conditions and obtain the suspect's surrender.

When available, department-authorized negotiators should respond to the scene as soon as practicable and assume communication responsibilities. Negotiators are permitted to exercise flexibility in each situation based upon their training, the circumstances presented, suspect actions or demands and the available resources.

## *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

### **414.3.1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS**

Only a deputy who has been designated by the District Attorney or Attorney General may use or authorize the use of an electronic amplifying or recording device to eavesdrop on or record, or both, oral communication in response to an emergency situation involving a hostage or the barricading of a location, and only when (Penal Code § 633.8(b)):

- (a) The deputy reasonably determines an emergency situation exists that involves the immediate danger of death or serious physical injury to any person within the meaning of 18 USC § 2518(7)(a)(i),
- (b) The deputy reasonably determines that the emergency situation requires that eavesdropping on oral communication occur immediately, and
- (c) There are grounds upon which an order could be obtained pursuant to 18 USC § 2516(2).
- (d) An application for an order approving the eavesdropping and complying with the requirements of Section 629.50 is made within 48 hours of the beginning of the eavesdropping.
- (e) The contents of any oral communications overheard are recorded on tape or other comparable device.

### **414.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

The responding supervisor shall, in addition to assuming initial command of the scene, prepare a "Threat Matrix" form when practical.

### **414.4 FIRST RESPONDER CONSIDERATIONS**

First responding deputies should promptly and carefully evaluate all available information to determine whether an incident involves, or may later develop into, a hostage or barricade situation.

The first responding deputy should immediately request a supervisor's response as soon as it is determined that a hostage or barricade situation exists. The first responding deputy shall assume the duties of the supervisor until relieved by a supervisor or a more qualified responder. The deputy shall continually evaluate the situation, including the level of risk to deputies, to the persons involved and to bystanders, and the resources currently available.

The handling deputy should brief the arriving supervisor of the incident, including information about suspects and victims, the extent of any injuries, additional resources or equipment that may be needed, and current perimeters and evacuation areas.

#### **414.4.1 BARRICADE SITUATION**

Unless circumstances require otherwise, deputies handling a barricade situation should attempt to avoid a forceful confrontation in favor of stabilizing the incident by establishing and maintaining lines of communication while awaiting the arrival of specialized personnel and trained negotiators. During the interim the following options, while not all-inclusive or in any particular order, should be considered:

## *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

- (a) Request a SWAT response
- (b) Ensure injured persons are evacuated from the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so. Request medical assistance.
- (c) Assign personnel to a contact team to control the subject should he/she attempt to exit the building, structure or vehicle, and attack, use deadly force, attempt to escape or surrender prior to additional resources arriving.
- (d) Request additional personnel, resources and equipment as needed (e.g., canine team, air support).
- (e) Provide responding emergency personnel with a safe arrival route to the location.
- (f) Evacuate non-injured persons in the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so.
- (g) Attempt or obtain a line of communication and gather as much information on the subject as possible, including weapons, other involved parties, additional hazards or injuries.
- (h) Establish an inner and outer perimeter as circumstances require and resources permit to prevent unauthorized access.
- (i) Evacuate bystanders, residents and businesses within the inner and then outer perimeter as appropriate. Check for injuries, the presence of other involved subjects, witnesses, evidence or additional information.
- (j) Determine the need for and notify the appropriate persons within and outside the Department, such as command officers and the Public Information Officer.
- (k) If necessary and available, establish a tactical or exclusive radio frequency for the incident.
- (l) Establish a command post.

### 414.4.2 HOSTAGE SITUATION

Deputies presented with a hostage situation should attempt to avoid a forceful confrontation in favor of controlling the incident in anticipation of the arrival of specialized personnel and trained hostage negotiators. However, it is understood that hostage situations are dynamic and can require that deputies react quickly to developing or changing threats. The following options while not all-inclusive or in any particular order, should be considered:

- (a) Request a SWAT response.
- (b) Ensure injured persons are evacuated from the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so. Request medical assistance.

## *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

- (c) Assign personnel to a contact team to control the subject should he/she attempt to exit the building, structure or vehicle, and attack, use deadly force, attempt to escape or surrender prior to additional resources arriving.
- (d) Establish a rapid response team in the event it becomes necessary to rapidly enter a building, structure or vehicle, such as when the suspect is using deadly force against any hostages (see the Rapid Response and Deployment Policy).
- (e) Assist hostages or potential hostages to escape if it is reasonably safe to do so. Hostages should be kept separated if practicable pending further interview.
- (f) Request additional personnel, resources and equipment as needed (e.g., canine team, air support).
- (g) Provide responding emergency personnel with a safe arrival route to the location.
- (h) Evacuate non-injured persons in the immediate threat area if it is reasonably safe to do so.
- (i) Coordinate pursuit or surveillance vehicles and control of travel routes.
- (j) Attempt or obtain a line of communication and gather as much information about the suspect as possible, including any weapons, victims and their injuries, additional hazards, other involved parties and any other relevant intelligence information.
- (k) Establish an inner and outer perimeter as resources and circumstances permit to prevent unauthorized access.
- (l) Evacuate bystanders, residents and businesses within the inner and then outer perimeter as appropriate. Check for injuries, the presence of other involved subjects, witnesses, evidence or additional information.
- (m) Determine the need for and notify the appropriate persons within and outside the Department, such as command officers and the Public Information Officer.
- (n) If necessary and available, establish a tactical or exclusive radio frequency for the incident.

### **414.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon being notified that a hostage or barricade situation exists, the supervisor should immediately respond to the scene, assess the risk level of the situation, establish a proper chain of command and assume the role of Incident Commander until properly relieved. This includes requesting a SWAT response and apprising the SWAT Captain of the circumstances. In addition, the following steps should be taken:

- (a) Ensure injured persons are evacuated and treated by medical personnel.
- (b) Ensure the completion of necessary first responder responsibilities or assignments.

## *Hostage and Barricade Incidents*

---

- (c) Request crisis negotiators, specialized units, additional personnel, resources or equipment as appropriate.
- (d) Establish a command post location as resources and circumstances permit.
- (e) Designate assistants who can help with intelligence information and documentation of the incident.
- (f) If it is practicable to do so, arrange for video documentation of the operation.
- (g) Consider contacting utility and communication providers to restrict such services (e.g., restricting electric power, gas, telephone service).
  - 1. When considering restricting communication services, a supervisor should make the determination that there is reason to believe an emergency situation exists involving immediate danger of death or great bodily harm and that an interruption to communication services is necessary to protect public safety. The supervisor must ensure the Department obtains a court order, in accordance with Public Utilities Code section 7908, prior to requesting the interruption. In the case of an extreme emergency when there is insufficient time to obtain an order prior to the request, application for the order must be submitted within six hours after initiating the interruption (Public Utilities Code § 7908).
- (h) Ensure adequate law enforcement coverage for the remainder of the County during the incident. The supervisor should direct non-essential personnel away from the scene unless they have been summoned by the supervisor or Dispatch.
- (i) Identify a media staging area outside the outer perimeter and have the department Public Information Officer or a designated temporary media representative provide media access in accordance with the News Media Relations Policy.
- (j) Identify the need for mutual aid and the transition or relief of personnel for incidents of extended duration.
- (k) Debrief personnel and review documentation as appropriate.

### **414.6 SWAT RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Operations Division Captain will determine if the SWAT Team will be deployed during a hostage or barricade situation. Once SWAT is deployed, the SWAT Commander or the authorized designee will be responsible for the tactical portion of the operation. The Incident Commander shall continue supervision of the outer perimeter security and evacuation, and media access. The Incident Commander and the SWAT Commander or the authorized designee shall maintain communications at all times.

## Response to Bomb Calls

### **416.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to assist members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office in their initial response to incidents involving explosives, explosive devices, explosion/bombing incidents or threats of such incidents. Under no circumstances should these guidelines be interpreted as compromising the safety of first responders or the public. When confronted with an incident involving explosives, safety should always be the primary consideration.

### **416.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to place a higher priority on the safety of persons and the public over damage or destruction to public or private property.

### **416.3 RECEIPT OF BOMB THREAT**

Department members receiving a bomb threat should obtain as much information from the individual as reasonably possible, including the type, placement and alleged detonation time of the device.

If the bomb threat is received on a recorded line, reasonable steps should be taken to ensure that the recording is preserved in accordance with established department evidence procedures.

The member receiving the bomb threat should ensure that the on duty Sergeant is immediately advised and informed of the details. This will enable the on duty Sergeant to ensure that the appropriate personnel are dispatched, and, as appropriate, the threatened location is given an advance warning.

### **416.4 GOVERNMENT FACILITY OR PROPERTY**

A bomb threat targeting a government facility may require a different response based on the government agency.

#### **416.4.1 MERCED COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE FACILITY**

If the bomb threat is against the Merced County Sheriff's Office facility, the on duty Sergeant will direct and assign deputies as required for coordinating a general building search or evacuation of the sheriff's department, as he/she deems appropriate.

#### **416.4.2 OTHER COUNTY OR MUNICIPAL FACILITY OR PROPERTY**

If the bomb threat is against a county or municipal facility within the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that is not the property of this department, the appropriate agency will be promptly informed of the threat. Assistance to the other entity may be provided as the on duty Sergeant deems appropriate.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Response to Bomb Calls*

---

#### **416.4.3 FEDERAL BUILDING OR PROPERTY**

If the bomb threat is against a federal building or property, the Federal Protective Service should be immediately notified. The Federal Protective Service provides a uniformed law enforcement response for most facilities, which may include use of its Explosive Detector Dog teams.

If the bomb threat is against a federal government property where the Federal Protective Service is unable to provide a timely response, the appropriate facility's security or command staff should be notified.

Bomb threats against a military installation should be reported to the military police or other military security responsible for the installation.

#### **416.5 PRIVATE FACILITY OR PROPERTY**

When a member of this department receives notification of a bomb threat at a location in the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department, the member receiving the notification should obtain as much information as reasonably possible from the notifying individual, including:

- (a) The location of the facility.
- (b) The nature of the threat.
- (c) Whether the type and detonation time of the device is known.
- (d) Whether the facility is occupied and, if so, the number of occupants currently on-scene.
- (e) Whether the individual is requesting sheriff's assistance at the facility.
- (f) Whether there are any internal facility procedures regarding bomb threats in place, such as:
  - 1. No evacuation of personnel and no search for a device.
  - 2. Search for a device without evacuation of personnel.
  - 3. Evacuation of personnel without a search for a device.
  - 4. Evacuation of personnel and a search for a device.

The member receiving the bomb threat information should ensure that the Patrol Lieutenant is immediately notified so that he/she can communicate with the person in charge of the threatened facility.

#### **416.5.1 ASSISTANCE**

The Operations Captain and Area Lieutenant should be notified when sheriff's assistance is requested. The on duty Sergeant will make the decision whether the Department will render assistance and at what level. Information and circumstances that indicate a reasonably apparent, imminent threat to the safety of either the facility or the public may require a more active approach, including sheriff's control over the facility.

Should the on duty Sergeant determine that the Department will assist or control such an incident, he/she will determine:

- (a) The appropriate level of assistance.

## *Response to Bomb Calls*

---

- (b) The plan for assistance.
- (c) Whether to evacuate and/or search the facility.
- (d) Whether to involve facility staff in the search or evacuation of the building.
  - 1. The person in charge of the facility should be made aware of the possibility of damage to the facility as a result of a search.
  - 2. The safety of all participants is the paramount concern.
- (e) The need for additional resources, including:
  - 1. Notification and response, or standby notice, for fire and emergency medical services.

Even though a facility does not request sheriff's assistance to clear the interior of a building, based upon the circumstances and known threat, deputies may be sent to the scene to evacuate other areas that could be affected by the type of threat, or for traffic and pedestrian control.

### **416.6 FOUND DEVICE**

When handling an incident involving a suspected explosive device, the following guidelines, while not all inclusive, should be followed:

- (a) No known or suspected explosive item should be considered safe regardless of its size or apparent packaging.
- (b) The device should not be touched or moved except by the bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team.
- (c) Personnel should not transmit on any equipment that is capable of producing radio frequency energy within the evacuation area around the suspected device. This includes the following:
  - 1. Two-way radios
  - 2. Cell phones
  - 3. Other personal communication devices
- (d) The appropriate bomb squad or military explosive ordnance disposal team should be summoned for assistance.
- (e) The largest perimeter reasonably possible should initially be established around the device based upon available personnel and the anticipated danger zone.
- (f) A safe access route should be provided for support personnel and equipment.
- (g) Search the area for secondary devices as appropriate and based upon available resources.
- (h) Consider evacuation of buildings and personnel near the device or inside the danger zone and the safest exit route.
- (i) Promptly relay available information to the Patrol Lieutenant including:
  - 1. The time of discovery.

## *Response to Bomb Calls*

---

2. The exact location of the device.
3. A full description of the device (e.g., size, shape, markings, construction).
4. The anticipated danger zone and perimeter.
5. The areas to be evacuated or cleared.

### **416.7 EXPLOSION/BOMBING INCIDENTS**

When an explosion has occurred, there are multitudes of considerations which may confront the responding deputies. As in other catastrophic events, a rapid response may help to minimize injury to victims, minimize contamination of the scene by gathering crowds, or minimize any additional damage from fires or unstable structures.

#### **416.7.1 CONSIDERATIONS**

Deputies responding to explosions, whether accidental or a criminal act, should consider the following actions:

- (a) Assess the scope of the incident, including the number of victims and extent of injuries.
- (b) Request additional personnel and resources, as appropriate.
- (c) Assist with first aid.
- (d) Identify and take appropriate precautions to mitigate scene hazards, such as collapsed structures, bloodborne pathogens and hazardous materials.
- (e) Assist with the safe evacuation of victims, if possible.
- (f) Establish an inner perimeter to include entry points and evacuation routes. Search for additional or secondary devices.
- (g) Preserve evidence.
- (h) Establish an outer perimeter and evacuate if necessary.
- (i) Identify witnesses.

#### **416.7.2 NOTIFICATIONS**

When an explosion has occurred, the following people should be notified as appropriate:

- Fire department
- Bomb squad
- Additional department personnel, such as investigators and forensic services
- Field supervisor
- The Sheriff, Undersheriff, Captains, Lieutenants, Director of Administrative Services shall be notified as soon as possible
- Other law enforcement agencies, including local, state or federal agencies, such as the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF)
- Other government agencies, as appropriate

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Response to Bomb Calls*

---

### 416.7.3 CROWD CONTROL

Only authorized members with a legitimate need should be permitted access to the scene. Spectators and other unauthorized individuals should be restricted to a safe distance as is reasonably practicable given the available resources and personnel.

### 416.7.4 PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE

As in any other crime scene, steps should immediately be taken to preserve the scene. The on scene supervisor should assign deputies to protect the crime scene area, which could extend over a long distance. Consideration should be given to the fact that evidence may be imbedded in nearby structures or hanging in trees and bushes.

## Mental Illness Commitments

### 418.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for when deputies may take a person into custody for psychiatric evaluation and treatment (5150 commitment) (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150).

### 418.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to protect the public and individuals through legal and appropriate use of the 72-hour treatment and evaluation commitment (5150 commitment) process.

### 418.3 AUTHORITY

A deputy having probable cause may take a person into custody and place the person in an approved mental health facility for 72-hour treatment and evaluation when the deputy believes that, as a result of a mental disorder, the person is a danger to him/herself or others or the person is gravely disabled (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150; Welfare and Institutions Code § 5585.50).

When determining whether to take a person into custody, deputies are not limited to determining the person is an imminent danger and shall consider reasonably available information about the historical course of the person's mental disorder, which may include evidence presented from any of the following (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150; Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150.05):

- (a) An individual who is providing or has provided mental health treatment or related support services to the person
- (b) A family member
- (c) The person subject to the determination or anyone designated by the person

#### 418.3.1 VOLUNTARY EVALUATION

If a deputy encounters an individual who may qualify for a 5150 commitment, he/she may inquire as to whether the person desires to voluntarily be evaluated at an appropriate facility. If the person so desires, the deputies should:

- (a) Transport the person to an appropriate facility that is able to conduct the evaluation and admit the person pursuant to a 5150 commitment.
- (b) If at any point the person changes his/her mind regarding voluntary evaluation, deputies should proceed with the 5150 commitment, if appropriate.
- (c) Document the circumstances surrounding the individual's desire to pursue voluntary evaluation and/or admission.

#### 418.3.2 RESTRAINTS

If the patient is violent or potentially violent, the deputy will notify the staff of this concern. The staff member in charge will have discretion as to whether soft-restraints will be used. If these restraints

## *Mental Illness Commitments*

---

are desired, the deputy will wait while they are being applied to help provide physical control of the patient, if needed.

### **418.3.3 MENTAL HEALTH DOCUMENTATION**

The deputy will complete an Application For 72-Hour Detention for Evaluation and Treatment form (MH-302) and provide it to the staff member assigned to that patient. The deputy will retain a copy of the 72-hour evaluation for inclusion in the case report. The deputy shall also provide a verbal summary to an emergency department staff member regarding the circumstances leading to the involuntary detention.

### **418.3.4 SECURING OF WEAPONS**

If a receiving and secured facility prohibits weapons or if an extraordinary event occurs in the treatment facility and deputies determine a need to secure their firearms, the firearm shall be secured in the appropriate gun locker at the facility or in the sheriff's unit.

## **418.4 CONSIDERATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any deputy handling a call involving an individual who may qualify for a 5150 commitment should consider, as time and circumstances reasonably permit:

- (a) Available information that might assist in determining the cause and nature of the person's action or stated intentions.
- (b) Community or neighborhood mediation services.
- (c) Conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques.
- (d) Community or other resources available to assist in dealing with mental health issues.

While these steps are encouraged, nothing in this section is intended to dissuade deputies from taking reasonable action to ensure the safety of the deputies and others.

Deputies should consider a 5150 commitment over arrest when mental health issues appear to be a mitigating factor for people who are suspected of committing minor crimes or creating other public safety issues.

### **418.4.1 SECURING OF PROPERTY**

When a person is taken into custody for evaluation, or within a reasonable time thereafter, and unless a responsible relative, guardian or conservator is in possession of the person's personal property, the deputy shall take reasonable precautions to safeguard the individual's personal property in his/her possession or on the premises occupied by the person (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150).

The deputy taking the person into custody shall provide a report to the court that describes the person's property and its disposition in the format provided in Welfare and Institutions Code § 5211, unless a responsible person took possession of the property, in which case the deputy shall only include the name of the responsible person and the location of the property (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150).

## *Mental Illness Commitments*

---

### **418.5 TRANSPORTATION**

When transporting any individual for a 5150 commitment, the transporting deputy should have Dispatch notify the receiving facility of the estimated time of arrival, the level of cooperation of the individual and whether any special medical care is needed.

Deputies may transport individuals in a patrol unit and shall secure them in accordance with the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy. Should the detainee require transport in a medical transport vehicle and the safety of any person, including the detainee, requires the presence of a deputy during the transport, on duty supervisor approval is required before transport commences.

#### **418.5.1 RETURN OF CONFISCATED FIREARMS AND WEAPONS**

- (a) Whenever the handling deputy has cause to believe that the future return of any confiscated weapon(s) might endanger the person or others, the deputy shall detail those facts and circumstances in a report. The report shall be forwarded to the Detective Unit which shall be responsible for initiating a petition to the superior court for a hearing in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(b), to determine whether or not the weapon(s) will be returned.
- (b) The petition to the Superior Court shall be initiated within 30 days of the release of the individual from whom such weapon(s) have been confiscated unless the Department makes an ex parte application to the court to extend the time to file such a petition, up to a maximum of 60 days. At the time any such petition is initiated, the Department shall send written notice to the individual informing him or her of the right to a hearing on the issue and that he or she has 30 days to confirm with the court clerk any desire for a hearing and that the failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of any confiscated weapon(s).
- (c) If no petition is initiated within the above period, the Department shall make the weapon(s) available for return in accordance with subsection (d) below. If the person does not confirm a desire for a hearing within the prescribed 30 days, the Department may file a petition for an order of default.
- (d) Under no circumstances shall any firearm be returned to any individual unless and until such person presents valid identification and written notification from the California Department of Justice which conforms to the provisions of Penal Code § 33865.
- (e) In no case in which a firearm or other deadly weapon is not retained as evidence shall the Department be required to retain such firearms or other deadly weapon longer than 180 days after notice has been provided to the owner that such firearm or other deadly weapon is available for return. At the expiration of such period, the firearm or other deadly weapon may be processed for disposal in accordance with applicable law (Penal Code § 33875).

## *Mental Illness Commitments*

---

### **418.6 TRANSFER TO APPROPRIATE FACILITY**

Upon arrival at the facility, the deputy will escort the individual into a treatment area designated by a facility staff member. If the individual is not seeking treatment voluntarily, the deputy should provide the staff member with the written application for 5150 commitment and remain present to provide clarification of the grounds for detention, upon request.

Absent exigent circumstances, the transporting deputy should not assist facility staff with the admission process, including restraint of the individual. However, if the individual is transported and delivered while restrained, the deputy may assist with transferring the individual to facility restraints and will be available to assist during the admission process, if requested. Under normal circumstances, deputies will not apply facility-ordered restraints.

### **418.7 DOCUMENTATION**

The deputy shall complete an application for a 72-Hour detention for evaluation and treatment, provide it to the facility staff member assigned to that patient and retain a copy of the application for inclusion in the case report.

The application shall include the circumstances for deputy involvement; the probable cause to believe the person is, as a result of a mental health disorder, a danger to others or him/herself or gravely disabled; and all information used for the determination of probable cause (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150; Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150.05).

The deputy should also provide a verbal summary to any evaluating staff member regarding the circumstances leading to the involuntary detention.

#### **418.7.1 ADVISEMENT**

The deputy taking a person into custody for evaluation shall advise the person of:

- (a) The deputy's name and agency.
- (b) The fact that the person is not under criminal arrest but is being taken for examination by mental health professionals and the mental health staff will advise him/her of their rights.
- (c) The name of the facility to which the person is being taken.
- (d) If the person is being taken into custody at his/her residence, he/she should also be advised that he/she may take a few personal items, which the deputy must approve, and may make a telephone call or leave a note indicating where he/she is being taken. The deputy should also ask if the person needs assistance turning off any appliance or water.

The advisement shall be given in a language the person understands. If the person cannot understand an oral advisement, the information shall be provided in writing (Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150).

## *Mental Illness Commitments*

---

### **418.8 CRIMINAL OFFENSES**

Deputies investigating an individual who is suspected of committing a minor criminal offense and who is being taken on a 5150 commitment should resolve the criminal matter by issuing a warning or a Notice to Appear as appropriate.

When an individual who may qualify for a 5150 commitment has committed a serious criminal offense that would normally result in an arrest and transfer to a jail facility, the deputy should:

- (a) Arrest the individual when there is probable cause to do so.
- (b) Notify the appropriate supervisor of the facts supporting the arrest and the facts that would support the 5150 commitment.
- (c) Facilitate the individual's transfer to jail.
- (d) Thoroughly document in the related reports the circumstances that indicate the individual may qualify for a 5150 commitment.

In the supervisor's judgment, the individual may instead be arrested or booked and transported to the appropriate mental health facility. The supervisor should consider the seriousness of the offense, the treatment options available, the ability of this department to regain custody of the individual, department resources (e.g., posting a guard) and other relevant factors in making this decision.

### **418.9 FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS**

Whenever a person is taken into custody for a 5150 commitment, the handling deputies should seek to determine if the person owns or has access to any firearm or other deadly weapon defined in Welfare and Institutions § 8100. Deputies should consider whether it is appropriate and consistent with current search and seizure law under the circumstances to seize any such firearms or other dangerous weapons (e.g. safekeeping, evidence, consent).

Deputies are cautioned that a search warrant may be needed before entering a residence or other place to search, unless lawful, warrantless entry has already been made (e.g., exigent circumstances, consent). A search warrant may also be needed before searching for or seizing weapons

The handling deputies shall issue a receipt describing the deadly weapon or any firearm seized, and list any serial number or other identification that is on the firearm. Deputies shall advise the person of the procedure for the return of any firearm or other weapon that has been taken into custody (Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102 (b)) (see Property and Evidence Policy).

#### **418.9.1 PETITION FOR RETURN OF FIREARMS AND OTHER WEAPONS**

Whenever the handling deputy has cause to believe that the future return of any confiscated weapon might endanger the person or others, the deputy shall detail those facts and circumstances in a report. The report shall be forwarded to the Detective Unit, which shall be responsible for initiating a petition to the Superior Court for a hearing in accordance with Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(c), to determine whether the weapon will be returned.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Mental Illness Commitments*

---

The petition to the Superior Court shall be initiated within 30 days of the release of the individual from whom such weapon has been confiscated, unless the Department makes an ex parte application to the court to extend the time to file such a petition, up to a maximum of 60 days. At the time any such petition is initiated, the Department shall send written notice to the individual informing him/her of the right to a hearing on the issue, that he/she has 30 days to confirm with the court clerk any desire for a hearing and that the failure to do so will result in the forfeiture of any confiscated weapon.

#### **418.10 TRAINING**

This department will endeavor to provide Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-approved advanced officer training on interaction with persons with mental disabilities, 5150 commitments and crisis intervention.

## Cite and Release Policy

### 420.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance on when to release adults who are arrested for a criminal misdemeanor offense on a written notice to appear (citation) and when to hold for court or bail.

### 420.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to release all persons arrested on misdemeanor or other qualifying charges on a citation with certain exceptions (Penal Code § 853.6).

If there is a reason for non-release, the Department's mission to protect the community will be the primary consideration when determining whether to release any individual in lieu of holding for court or bail.

### 420.3 RELEASE BY CITATION

Except in cases where a reason for non-release as described below exists, adults arrested for a misdemeanor offense, including a private persons arrest, shall be released from custody on a citation (Penal Code § 853.6).

The citing deputy shall, at the time the defendant signs the notice to appear, call attention to the time and place for appearance and take any other steps he/she deems necessary to ensure that the defendant understands his/her written promise to appear.

#### 420.3.1 FIELD CITATIONS

In most cases an adult arrested for a misdemeanor offense may be released in the field on a citation in lieu of physical arrest when booking and fingerprinting is not practicable or immediately required provided the individual can be satisfactorily identified, there is no outstanding arrest warrant for the individual and none of the below described disqualifying circumstances are present (Penal Code § 853.6; Penal Code § 1270.1). In such cases the arresting deputy should check the booking required box on the citation form to indicate that the person will be photographed and fingerprinted at a later time when ordered by the court.

When a booking photo or fingerprints are needed for the furtherance of any investigation, the person should be released on citation after booking instead of on a field citation.

#### 420.3.2 RELEASE AFTER BOOKING

In some cases it may not be feasible or desirable to release a person in the field. The person should instead be released on citation after booking at the jail. All bookings shall be approved by the on duty supervisor or the authorized designee.

### 420.4 NON-RELEASE

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Cite and Release Policy*

---

#### 420.4.1 DISQUALIFYING OFFENSES

An adult arrested on any of the following disqualifying charges shall not be released on citation and shall be transported to the appropriate detention facility or held for court or bail after booking:

Disqualifying offenses include (Penal Code § 1270.1):

- (a) Misdemeanor domestic battery (Penal Code § 243(e)(1)).
- (b) Felony domestic battery (Penal Code § 273.5).
- (c) Serious or violent felonies (Penal Code § 1270.1(a)(1)).
- (d) Violation of a protective order and the arrested person has made threats, used violence or has gone to the protected person's workplace or residence (Penal Code § 273.6).
- (e) Stalking (Penal Code § 646.9).
- (f) Misdemeanor violations of a protective order relating to domestic violence if there is a reasonable likelihood the offense will continue or the safety of the individuals or property would be endangered (Penal Code § 853.6).

#### 420.4.2 REASONS FOR NON-RELEASE

A person arrested for a misdemeanor shall be released on a citation unless there is a reason for non-release. The Patrol Lieutenant may authorize a release on citation regardless of whether a reason for non-release exists when it is determined to be in the best interest of the Department and does not present an unreasonable risk to the community (e.g., release of an intoxicated or ill person to a responsible adult).

Reasons for non-release include (Penal Code § 853.6(i)):

- (a) The person arrested is so intoxicated that he/she could be a danger to him/herself or to others. Release may occur as soon as this condition no longer exists.
- (b) The person arrested requires medical examination or medical care or is otherwise unable to care for his/her own safety
  - 1. The Merced County Sheriff's Office shall not release an arrestee from custody for the purpose of allowing that person to seek medical care at a hospital, and then immediately re-arrest the same individual upon discharge from the hospital, unless the hospital determines this action will enable it to bill and collect from a third-party payment source (Penal Code § 4011.10).
- (c) The person is arrested for one or more of the offenses listed in Vehicle Code §§ 40302, 40303 and 40305.
- (d) There are one or more outstanding arrest warrants for the person (see Misdemeanor Warrants elsewhere in this policy).
- (e) The person could not provide satisfactory evidence of personal identification.
  - 1. If a person released on citation does not have satisfactory identification in his/her possession, a right thumbprint or fingerprint should be obtained on the citation form.

## *Cite and Release Policy*

---

- (f) The prosecution of the offense or offenses for which the person was arrested or the prosecution of any other offense or offenses would be jeopardized by the immediate release of the person arrested.
- (g) There is a reasonable likelihood that the offense or offenses would continue or resume, or that the safety of persons or property would be imminently endangered by the release of the person arrested.
- (h) The person arrested demands to be taken before a magistrate or has refused to sign the notice to appear.
- (i) There is reason to believe that the person would not appear at the time and place specified in the notice to appear. The basis for this determination shall be specifically documented. Reasons may include:
  - (a) Previous failure to appear is on record
  - (b) The person lacks ties to the area, such as a residence, job or family
  - (c) Unusual circumstances lead the deputy responsible for the release of prisoners to conclude that the suspect should be held for further investigation

When a person is arrested on a misdemeanor offense and is not released by criminal citation, the reason for non-release shall be noted on the booking form. This form shall be submitted to the Patrol Lieutenant for approval and included with the case file in the Records Division.

### **420.5 MISDEMEANOR WARRANTS**

An adult arrested on a misdemeanor warrant may be released, subject to on duty patrol sergeant approval, unless any of the following conditions exist:

- (a) The misdemeanor cited in the warrant involves violence
- (b) The misdemeanor cited in the warrant involves a firearm
- (c) The misdemeanor cited in the warrant involves resisting arrest
- (d) The misdemeanor cited in the warrant involves giving false information to a peace deputy
- (e) The person arrested is a danger to him/herself or others due to intoxication or being under the influence of drugs or narcotics
- (f) The person requires medical examination or medical care or was otherwise unable to care for his/her own safety
- (g) The person has other ineligible charges pending against him/her
- (h) There is reasonable likelihood that the offense or offenses would continue or resume, or that the safety of persons or property would be immediately endangered by the release of the person
- (i) The person refuses to sign the notice to appear
- (j) The person cannot provide satisfactory evidence of personal identification

## *Cite and Release Policy*

---

- (k) The warrant of arrest indicates that the person is not eligible to be released on a notice to appear

Release under this section shall be done in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

### **420.6 JUVENILE CITATIONS**

Completion of criminal citations for juveniles is generally not appropriate with the following exceptions:

- Misdemeanor traffic violations of the Vehicle Code
- Violations of the Merced County Sheriff's Department County codes

All other misdemeanor violations for juveniles shall be documented with a case number and the case should be referred to the Detective Unit for further action including diversion.

# Out of State and County Arrest Extradition Waiver

## 421.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended to provide a defendant, who was arrested in a county other than the county where the crime was charged, written notification of his right to be taken before a Magistrate within the county of arrest. This policy also addresses out of state extradition procedures.

### 421.1.1 OUT OF COUNTY: WRITTEN NOTIFICATION

When a defendant is arrested in a county other than the county where the crime was charged, the officer must, without unnecessary delay, inform the defendant in writing of his right to be taken before a magistrate in that county, note on the warrant that he has so informed defendant, and, upon being required by defendant, take him before a magistrate in that county (Penal Code § 821 and 822).

The written notification shall consist of the completion of a Written Notification and Waiver form. If the defendant chooses to waive this right, he shall indicate so by signing his name in the waiver section of that form. Once the defendant has waived this right, he may be taken before a magistrate in the county where the crime was charged.

### 421.1.2 OUT OF STATE

Out of state warrants are not treated the same as local or out of county warrants. Out of state warrants are to be treated as any other criminal investigation. When an out of state warrant is confirmed and extradition is approved, a criminal investigation under Penal Code section 1551 has begun.

1. A report of the investigation must be prepared documenting the subject's identity, the subject's knowledge of the out of state warrant, statements made by the subject, and other details and then forwarded to the District Attorney's office for review.
2. The District Attorney's office may file a criminal complaint on the subject. When the subject is arraigned, the subject may challenge the warrant stating s/he is not the same person and request an identity hearing. The judge will set a identity hearing within in 5 days and request all information from the state issuing the warrant and the deputy's report.

# Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Representatives

## 422.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure that members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office extend appropriate privileges and immunities to foreign diplomatic and consular representatives in accordance with international law.

## 422.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office respects international laws related to the special privileges and immunities afforded foreign diplomatic and consular representatives assigned to the United States.

All foreign diplomatic and consular representatives shall be treated with respect and courtesy, regardless of any privileges or immunities afforded them.

## 422.3 CLAIMS OF IMMUNITY

If a member comes into contact with a person where law enforcement action may be warranted and the person claims diplomatic or consular privileges and immunities, the member should, without delay:

- (a) Notify a supervisor.
- (b) Advise the person that his/her claim will be investigated and he/she may be released in accordance with the law upon confirmation of the person's status.
- (c) Request the person's identification card, either issued by the U.S. Department of State (DOS), Office of the Chief of Protocol, or in the case of persons accredited to the United Nations, by the U.S. Mission to the United Nations. These are the only reliable documents for purposes of determining privileges and immunities.
- (d) Contact the DOS Diplomatic Security Command Center at 571-345-3146 or toll free at 866-217-2089, or at another current telephone number and inform the center of the circumstances.
- (e) Verify the immunity status with DOS and follow any instructions regarding further detention, arrest, prosecution and/or release, as indicated by the DOS representative. This may require immediate release, even if a crime has been committed.

Identity or immunity status should not be presumed from the type of license plates displayed on a vehicle. If there is a question as to the status or the legitimate possession of a Diplomat or Consul license plate, a query should be run via the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS), designating "US" as the state.

## *Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Representatives*

---

### **422.4 ENFORCEMENT**

If the DOS is not immediately available for consultation regarding law enforcement action, members shall be aware of the following:

- (a) Generally, all persons with diplomatic and consular privileges and immunities may be issued a citation or notice to appear. However, the person may not be compelled to sign the citation.
- (b) All persons, even those with a valid privilege or immunity, may be reasonably restrained in exigent circumstances for purposes of self-defense, public safety or the prevention of serious criminal acts.
- (c) An impaired foreign diplomatic or consular representative may be prevented from driving a vehicle, even if the person may not be arrested due to privileges and immunities.
  - 1. Investigations, including the request for field sobriety tests, chemical tests and any other tests regarding impaired driving may proceed but they shall not be compelled.
- (d) The following persons may not be detained or arrested, and any property or vehicle owned by these persons may not be searched or seized:
  - 1. Diplomatic-level staff of missions to international organizations and recognized family members
  - 2. Diplomatic agents and recognized family members
  - 3. Members of administrative and technical staff of a diplomatic mission and recognized family members
  - 4. Career consular officers, unless the person is the subject of a felony warrant
- (e) The following persons may generally be detained and arrested:
  - 1. International organization staff; however, some senior officers are entitled to the same treatment as diplomatic agents.
  - 2. Support staff of missions to international organizations
  - 3. Diplomatic service staff and consular employees; however, special bilateral agreements may exclude employees of certain foreign countries.
  - 4. Honorary consular officers
  - 5. Whenever a deputy arrests and incarcerates, or detains for investigation for over two hours, a person with diplomatic and consular privileges and immunities, the deputy shall promptly advise the person that he/she is entitled to have his/her government notified of the arrest or detention (Penal Code § 834c). If the individual wants his/her government notified, the deputy shall begin the notification process.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Representatives*

---

#### **422.5 DOCUMENTATION**

All contacts with persons who have claimed privileges and immunities afforded foreign diplomatic and consular representatives should be thoroughly documented and the related reports forwarded to DOS.

#### **422.6 DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY TABLE**

Reference table on diplomatic immunity:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Arrested or Detained</b>	<b>Enter Residence Subject to Ordinary Procedures</b>	<b>Issued Traffic Citation</b>	<b>Subpoenaed as Witness</b>	<b>Prosecuted</b>	<b>Recognized Family Members</b>
<b>Diplomatic Agent</b>	No (note (b))	No	Yes	No	No	Same as sponsor (full immunity & inviolability)
<b>Member of Admin and Tech Staff</b>	No (note (b))	No	Yes	No	No	Same as sponsor (full immunity & inviolability)
<b>Service Staff</b>	Yes (note (a))	Yes	Yes	Yes	No for official acts. Yes otherwise (note (a))	No immunity or inviolability (note (a))
<b>Career Consul Officer</b>	Yes if for a felony and pursuant to a warrant (note (a))	Yes (note (d))	Yes	No for official acts Testimony may not be compelled in any case	No for official acts. Yes otherwise (note (a))	No immunity or inviolability
<b>Honorable Consul Officer</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	No for official acts Yes otherwise.	No for official acts Yes otherwise	No immunity or inviolability
<b>Consulate Employees</b>	Yes (note (a))	Yes	Yes	No for official acts Yes otherwise.	No for official acts. Yes otherwise (note (a))	No immunity or inviolability (note (a))
<b>Int'l Org Staff (note (b))</b>	Yes (note (c))	Yes (note (c))	Yes	Yes (note (c))	No for official acts. Yes otherwise (note (c))	No immunity or inviolability

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Foreign Diplomatic and Consular Representatives*

---

<b>Diplomatic-Level Staff of Missions to Int'l Org</b>	No (note (b))	No	Yes	No	No	Same as sponsor (full immunity & inviolability)
<b>Support Staff of Missions to Int'l Orgs</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No for official acts Yes otherwise	No immunity or inviolability

Notes for diplomatic immunity table:

- (a) This table presents general rules. The employees of certain foreign countries may enjoy higher levels of privileges and immunities on the basis of special bilateral agreements.
- (b) Reasonable constraints, however, may be applied in emergency circumstances involving self-defense, public safety, or in the prevention of serious criminal acts.
- (c) A small number of senior officers are entitled to be treated identically to diplomatic agents.
- (d) Note that consul residences are sometimes located within the official consular premises. In such cases, only the official office space is protected from police entry.

## Rapid Response and Deployment

### 424.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Violence that is committed in schools, workplaces and other locations by individuals or a group of individuals who are determined to target and kill persons and to create mass casualties presents a difficult situation for law enforcement. The purpose of this policy is to identify guidelines and factors that will assist responding deputies in situations that call for rapid response and deployment.

### 424.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will endeavor to plan for rapid response to crisis situations, and to coordinate response planning with other emergency services as well as with those that are responsible for operating sites that may be the target of a critical incident.

Nothing in this policy shall preclude the use of reasonable force, deadly or otherwise, by members of the Department in protecting themselves or others from death or serious injury.

### 424.3 FIRST RESPONSE

If there is a reasonable belief that acts or threats by a suspect are placing lives in imminent danger, first responding deputies should consider reasonable options to reduce, prevent or eliminate the threat. Deputies must decide, often under a multitude of difficult and rapidly evolving circumstances, whether to advance on the suspect, take other actions to deal with the threat or wait for additional resources.

If a suspect is actively engaged in the infliction of serious bodily harm or other life-threatening activity toward others, deputies should take immediate action, if reasonably possible, while requesting additional assistance.

Deputies should remain aware of the possibility that an incident may be part of a coordinated multi-location attack that may require some capacity to respond to other incidents at other locations.

When deciding on a course of action deputies should consider:

- (a) Whether to advance on or engage a suspect who is still a possible or perceived threat to others. Any advance or engagement should be based on information known or received at the time.
- (b) Whether to wait for additional resources or personnel. This does not preclude an individual deputy from taking immediate action.
- (c) Whether individuals who are under imminent threat can be moved or evacuated with reasonable safety.
- (d) Whether the suspect can be contained or denied access to victims.
- (e) Whether the deputies have the ability to effectively communicate with other personnel or resources.

## *Rapid Response and Deployment*

---

- (f) Whether planned tactics can be effectively deployed.
- (g) The availability of rifles, shotguns, shields, breaching tools, control devices and any other appropriate tools, and whether the deployment of these tools will provide a tactical advantage.

In a case of a barricaded suspect with no hostages and no immediate threat to others, deputies should consider summoning and waiting for additional assistance (special tactics and/or hostage negotiation team response).

### **424.4 CONSIDERATIONS**

When dealing with a crisis situation members should:

- (a) Assess the immediate situation and take reasonable steps to maintain operative control of the incident.
- (b) Obtain, explore and analyze sources of intelligence and known information regarding the circumstances, location and suspect involved in the incident.
- (c) Attempt to attain a tactical advantage over the suspect by reducing, preventing or eliminating any known or perceived threat.
- (d) Attempt, if feasible and based upon the suspect's actions and danger to others, a negotiated surrender of the suspect and release of the hostages.

### **424.5 PLANNING**

Area Lieutenants should coordinate critical incident planning. Planning efforts should consider:

- (a) Identification of likely critical incident target sites, such as schools, shopping centers, entertainment and sporting event venues.
- (b) Availability of building plans and venue schematics of likely critical incident target sites.
- (c) Communications interoperability with other law enforcement and emergency service agencies.
- (d) Training opportunities in critical incident target sites, including joint training with site occupants.
- (e) Evacuation routes in critical incident target sites.
- (f) Patrol first-response training.
- (g) Response coordination and resources of emergency medical and fire services.
- (h) Equipment needs.
- (i) Mutual aid agreements with other agencies.
- (j) Coordination with private security providers in critical incident target sites.

## *Rapid Response and Deployment*

---

### **424.6 TRAINING**

The Training Manager should include rapid response to critical incidents in the training plan. This training should address:

- (a) Orientation to likely critical incident target sites, such as schools, shopping centers, entertainment and sporting event venues.
- (b) Communications interoperability with other law enforcement and emergency service agencies.
- (c) Patrol first-response training, including patrol rifle, shotgun, breaching tool and control device training.
  - 1. This should include the POST terrorism incident training required for deputies assigned to field duties (Penal Code § 13519.12).
- (d) First aid, including gunshot trauma.
- (e) Reality-based scenario training (e.g., active shooter, disgruntled violent worker).

# Immigration Violations

## **428.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office relating to immigration and interacting with federal immigration officials.

## **428.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that all members make personal and professional commitments to equal enforcement of the law and equal service to the public. Confidence in this commitment will increase the effectiveness of this [department/office] in protecting and serving the entire community and recognizing the dignity of all persons, regardless of their national origin or immigration status.

## **428.3 VICTIMS AND WITNESSES**

To encourage crime reporting and cooperation in the investigation of criminal activity, all individuals, regardless of their immigration status, must feel secure that contacting or being addressed by members of law enforcement will not automatically lead to immigration inquiry and/or deportation. While it may be necessary to determine the identity of a victim or witness, members shall treat all individuals equally and without regard to race, ethnicity or national origin in any way that would violate the United States or California constitutions.

## **428.4 IMMIGRATION INQUIRIES PROHIBITED**

Deputies shall not inquire into an individual's immigration status for immigration enforcement purposes (Government Code § 7284.6).

## **428.5 DETENTIONS**

A deputy shall not detain any individual, for any length of time, for a civil violation of federal immigration laws or a related civil warrant (Government Code § 7284.6).

A deputy who has a reasonable suspicion that an individual already lawfully contacted or detained has committed a criminal violation of 8 UCS § 1326(a) (unlawful reentry) that may be subject to enhancement may detain the person for a reasonable period of time to contact federal immigration officials to verify whether the United States Attorney General has granted the individual permission for reentry and whether the violation is subject to enhancement (Government Code § 7284.6). No individual who is otherwise ready to be released should continue to be detained only because questions about the individual's status are unresolved.

If the deputy has facts that establish probable cause to believe that a person already lawfully detained has violated 8 USC § 1326(a) and the penalty may be subject to enhancement due to prior conviction for specified aggravated felonies, he/she may arrest the individual for that offense (Government Code § 7284.6).

## *Immigration Violations*

---

A deputy shall not detain any individual, for any length of time, for any other criminal violation of federal immigration laws (Government Code § 7284.6).

A deputy should notify a supervisor as soon as practicable whenever an individual is arrested for violation of 8 USC § 1326(a).

### **428.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

When notified that a deputy has arrested an individual for violation of 8 USC § 1326(a), the supervisor should determine whether it is appropriate to:

- (a) Transfer the person to federal authorities.
- (b) Transfer the person to jail.

### **428.6 FEDERAL REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE**

Requests by federal immigration officials for assistance from this [department/office] should be directed to a supervisor. The supervisor is responsible for determining whether the requested assistance would be permitted under the California Values Act (Government Code § 7284.2 et seq.).

### **428.7 INFORMATION SHARING**

No member of this [department/office] will prohibit, or in any way restrict, any other member from doing any of the following regarding the citizenship or immigration status, lawful or unlawful, of any individual (8 USC § 1373; Government Code § 7284.6):

- (a) Sending information to, or requesting or receiving such information from federal immigration officials
- (b) Maintaining such information in [department/office] records
- (c) Exchanging such information with any other federal, state or local government entity

Nothing in this policy restricts sharing information that is permissible under the California Values Act.

#### **428.7.1 IMMIGRATION DETAINERS**

No individual should be held based solely on a federal immigration detainer under 8 CFR 287.7 (Government Code § 7284.6).

Notification to a federal authority may be made prior to release of an individual who is the subject of a notification request only if the individual meets one of the following conditions (Government Code § 7282.5; Government Code § 7284.6):

- (a) The individual has been arrested and had a judicial probable cause determination for a serious or violent felony identified in Penal Code § 667.5(c) or Penal Code § 1192.7(c).
- (b) The individual has been arrested and had a judicial probable cause determination for a felony punishable by time in a state penitentiary.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Immigration Violations*

---

- (c) The individual has been convicted of an offense as identified in Government Code § 7282.5(a).
- (d) The individual is a current registrant on the California Sex and Arson Registry.
- (e) The individual is identified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement as the subject of an outstanding federal felony arrest warrant.

#### 428.7.2 NOTICE TO INDIVIDUALS

Individuals in custody shall be given a copy of documentation received from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) regarding a hold, notification or transfer request along with information as to whether the Merced County Sheriff's Office intends to comply with the request (Government Code § 7283.1).

If the Merced County Sheriff's Office provides ICE with notification that an individual is being, or will be, released on a certain date, the same notification shall be provided in writing to the individual and to his/her attorney or to one additional person who the individual may designate (Government Code § 7283.1).

#### 428.7.3 ICE INTERVIEWS

Before any interview regarding civil immigration violations takes place between ICE personnel and an individual in custody, the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall provide the individual with a written consent form that explains the purpose of the interview, that the interview is voluntary and that he/she may decline to be interviewed or may choose to be interviewed only with his/her attorney present. The consent form must be available in the languages specified in Government Code § 7283.1.

#### 428.7.4 TRANSFERS TO IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES

Members shall not transfer an individual to immigration authorities unless one of the following circumstances exist:

- (a) Transfer is authorized by a judicial warrant or judicial probable cause determination.
- (b) The individual has been convicted of an offense as identified in Government Code § 7282.5(a).
- (c) The individual is a current registrant on the California Sex and Arson Registry.
- (d) The individual is identified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Immigration and Customs Enforcement as the subject of an outstanding federal felony arrest warrant.
- (e) Immigration authorities may be allowed to enter the custodial facilities "Sally Port" of the Merced County Sheriff to take custody of persons that are being released from that facility if such federal authorities intend on taking the person to be released into federal custody.

## *Immigration Violations*

---

### **428.8 U VISA AND T VISA NONIMMIGRANT STATUS**

Under certain circumstances, federal law allows temporary immigration benefits, known as a U visa, to victims and witnesses of certain qualifying crimes (8 USC § 1101(a)(15)(U)).

Similar immigration protection, known as a T visa, is available for certain qualifying victims of human trafficking (8 USC § 1101(a)(15)(T)).

Any request for assistance in applying for U visa or T visa status should be forwarded in a timely manner to the Detective Unit supervisor assigned to oversee the handling of any related case. The Detective Unit supervisor should:

- (a) Consult with the assigned investigator to determine the current status of any related case and whether further documentation is warranted.
- (b) Contact the appropriate prosecutor assigned to the case, if applicable, to ensure the certification or declaration has not already been completed and whether a certification or declaration is warranted.
- (c) Address the request and complete the certification or declaration, if appropriate, in a timely manner.
  - 1. The instructions for completing certification and declaration forms can be found on the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) website.
  - 2. Form I-918 Supplement B certification shall be completed if the victim qualifies under Penal Code § 679.10 (multiple serious offenses). Form I-914 Supplement B certification shall be completed if the victim qualifies under Penal Code § 236.5 or Penal Code § 679.11 (human trafficking).
- (d) Ensure that any decision to complete, or not complete, a certification or declaration form is documented in the case file and forwarded to the appropriate prosecutor. Include a copy of any completed form in the case file.
- (e) Inform the victim liaison of any requests and their status.

#### **428.8.1 TIME FRAMES FOR COMPLETION**

Deputies and their supervisors who are assigned to investigate a case of human trafficking as defined by Penal Code § 236.1 shall complete the above process and the documents needed for indicating the individual is a victim for the T visa application within 15 business days of the first encounter with the victim, regardless of whether it is requested by the victim (Penal Code § 236.5).

Deputies and their supervisors shall complete the above process and the documents needed certifying victim cooperation for a U visa or T visa application pursuant to Penal Code § 679.10 and Penal Code § 679.11 within 90 days of a request from the victim or victim's family related to one of their assigned cases. If the victim is in removal proceedings, the certification shall be processed within 14 days of the request.

#### **428.8.2 REPORTING TO LEGISLATURE**

The Detective Unit supervisor or the authorized designee should ensure that certification requests are reported to the Legislature in January of each year and include the number of certifications

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Immigration Violations*

---

signed and the number denied. The report shall comply with Government Code § 9795 (Penal Code § 679.10; Penal Code § 679.11).

## Patrol Rifles

### 432.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In order to more effectively and accurately address the increasing level of fire power and body armor utilized by criminal suspects, the Merced County Sheriff's Office will make patrol rifles available to qualified patrol deputies as an additional and more immediate tactical resource.

### 432.2 PATROL RIFLE

Patrol rifles, whether departmentally assigned or privately purchased for departmental use shall be deployed only for law enforcement purposes. Recreational use of these weapons is prohibited.

#### 432.2.1 DEFINITION

A patrol rifle is an authorized weapon which is owned by the Department and which is made available to properly trained and qualified deputies as a supplemental resource to their duty handgun or shotgun. A patrol rifle also may be purchased and personally owned by a deputy and may be carried for patrol duty if pre-approved in writing by the Sheriff and the department Armorer.

#### 432.2.2 PERSONALLY OWNED RIFLES

A deputy sheriff may purchase his/her own rifle for use as long as certain criteria are met:

- (a) Full time deputy sheriff's must have successfully completed their probationary period.
- (b) Reserve deputy sheriff's must have at least one year on the department and have the approval of the Reserve Coordinator and the Rangemaster.

### 432.3 SPECIFICATIONS

Only weapons and ammunition that meet agency authorized specifications, approved by the Sheriff, and issued by the Department may be used by deputies in their law enforcement responsibilities. The authorized patrol rifle issued by the Department is the Colt AR-15 style rifle.

#### 432.3.1 RIFLE EQUIPMENT AND AMMUNITION

The only ammunition authorized for the patrol rifle is that which has been issued by the Department. This will consist of a quality factory load in a .223/5.56 caliber.

- (a) A sling system shall be on each rifle. All rifles shall have a Department Armorer approved sling that will allow the operator to maintain control of the rifle while it is not being actively used. This sling will allow the user to quickly shoulder the rifle in the event it is needed
- (b) Optic may be installed on the rifle at the expense of the rifle operator. Any optical sighting device must be approved by the Department Range Master. The optical sight must fit the following operation and function:
  - 1. Optic device has no magnification capabilities

## *Patrol Rifles*

---

2. Optic device and mount allows for the use of rifle's iron sights as standalone or co-witness with the iron sights
  3. Optic device does not project a laser toward the target
  4. Optic device is utilized for training and qualification in addition to training and qualification with the iron sights
- (c) Weapon mounted lights are required. If a deputy uses his personally owned rifle, the operator must supply his own weapon mounted light at the expense of the operator, that conforms to the department standard. The weapon light must meet the following criteria:
1. Light can be operated with a switch that allows for momentary and constant operation
  2. Mounted so that it does not interfere with any part of the rifle that would affect the safe operation of the rifle
- (d) Muzzle breaks may be utilized in lieu of a flash suppressor on the barrel in order to make the rifle conform to legal assault rifle configuration as determined by the Department of Justice.
- (e) Additional magazines may be carried on the duty belt, tactical patrol vest, or attached to the rifle with clips or pouches providing that they do not interfere with the safe operation of the rifle.
- (f) No other modification, internal or external, may be done to the rifle that would affect the operation of the rifle. Before utilization, support equipment shall be subject to the approval by the Department Range Master. Any modification must be approved and installed by the Department Armorer before use or deployment while on duty. No modification of any kind will be made to any departmental or personally owned rifle by anyone other than the Department Armorer.

### **432.4 RIFLE MAINTENANCE**

- (a) The routine maintenance and care of patrol rifles is the responsibility of the respective deputy to whom the weapon belongs or to whom it is assigned.
- (b) Primary responsibility for repair of patrol rifles shall fall on the department Armorer who may inspect and service each patrol rifle as needed.
- (c) Each patrol deputy carrying a patrol rifle may be required to field strip and clean an assigned patrol rifle as needed.
- (d) Each patrol deputy shall be responsible for promptly reporting any damage or malfunction of an assigned patrol rifle.
- (e) Any patrol rifle found to be unserviceable shall be removed from service.

## *Patrol Rifles*

---

- (f) Each patrol rifle shall be subject to inspection by a supervisor or the Rangemaster at any time.
- (g) No modification shall be made to any patrol rifle without prior authorization from the Rangemaster or Armorer.

### **432.5 TRAINING**

Deputies shall not carry or utilize the patrol rifle unless they have successfully completed departmental training. This training shall consist of an initial 24-hour patrol rifle user's course and qualification score with a certified patrol rifle instructor. Deputies shall thereafter be required to successfully scheduled department rifle training and qualification conducted by a certified patrol rifle instructor. This training will include that deputies successfully complete POST Certified Rifle Update courses that are held regularly.

Any deputy who fails to qualify or who fails to successfully complete two or more department sanctioned training/qualification sessions within a calendar year will no longer be authorized to carry the patrol rifle without successfully retaking the initial patrol deputies user's course and qualification.

### **432.6 DEPLOYMENT OF THE PATROL RIFLE**

Deputies may deploy the patrol rifle in any circumstance where the deputy can articulate a reasonable expectation that the rifle may be needed. Examples of some general guidelines for deploying the patrol rifle may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Situations where the deputy reasonably anticipates an armed encounter.
- (b) When a deputy is faced with a situation that may require the delivery of accurate and effective fire at long range.
- (c) Situations where a deputy reasonably expects the need to meet or exceed a suspect's firepower.
- (d) When a deputy reasonably believes that there may be a need to deliver fire on a barricaded suspect or a suspect with a hostage.
- (e) When a deputy reasonably believes that a suspect may be wearing body armor.
- (f) When authorized or requested by a supervisor.

### **432.7 DISCHARGE OF THE PATROL RIFLE**

The discharge of the patrol rifle shall be governed by the Department's Deadly Force Policy, Policy Manual § 300.

## *Patrol Rifles*

---

### **432.8 PATROL READY**

Any qualified deputy carrying a patrol rifle in the field shall maintain the weapon in the "patrol ready" until deployed. A rifle is considered "patrol ready" when it has been inspected by the assigned deputy and meets the following conditions:

- (a) The chamber is empty.
- (b) The rifle bolt is forward with the hammer down; the safety will not go into the "safe" position.
- (c) There is a fully loaded magazine in the rifle. 30 round magazine with no more than 28 rounds and a 20 round magazine with no more than 18 rounds. Magpul brand magazines must be loaded to the maximum capacity of rounds.
- (d) The dust cover is closed.
- (e) The rifle is stored in the locked patrol vehicle's locking rifle rack or in a carrying case in the trunk where the rifle is secured by a cable lock or other locking device. No rifle will be left unsecured in any vehicle.

### **432.9 RIFLE STORAGE**

- (a) When not in use, patrol rifles will be stored in the deputy's locker or safely and securely at home.

## Aircraft Accidents

### 434.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Merced County Sheriff's Office members with guidelines for handling aircraft accidents.

This policy does not supersede, and is supplementary to, applicable portions of the Crime and Disaster Scene Integrity, Emergency Management Plan and Hazardous Material Response policies.

#### 434.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Aircraft** - Any fixed wing aircraft, rotorcraft, balloon, blimp/dirigible or glider that is capable of carrying a person or any unmanned aerial vehicle other than those intended for non-commercial recreational use.

### 434.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to provide an appropriate emergency response to aircraft accidents. This includes emergency medical care and scene management.

### 434.3 ARRIVAL AT SCENE

Deputies or other authorized members tasked with initial scene management should establish an inner and outer perimeter to:

- (a) Protect persons and property.
- (b) Prevent any disturbance or further damage to the wreckage or debris, except to preserve life or rescue the injured.
- (c) Preserve ground scars and marks made by the aircraft.
- (d) Manage the admission and access of public safety and medical personnel to the extent necessary to preserve life or to stabilize hazardous materials.
- (e) Maintain a record of persons who enter the accident site.
- (f) Consider implementation of an Incident Command System (ICS).

### 434.4 INJURIES AND CASUALTIES

Members should address emergency medical issues and provide care as a first priority.

Those tasked with the supervision of the scene should coordinate with the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) before the removal of bodies. If that is not possible, the scene supervisor should ensure documentation of what was disturbed, including switch/control positions and instrument/gauge readings.

## *Aircraft Accidents*

---

### **434.5 NOTIFICATIONS**

When an aircraft accident is reported to this [department/office], the responding supervisor shall ensure notification is or has been made to NTSB, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), and when applicable, the appropriate branch of the military.

Supervisors shall ensure other notifications are made once an aircraft accident has been reported. The notifications will vary depending on the type of accident, extent of injuries or damage, and the type of aircraft involved. When an aircraft accident has occurred, it is generally necessary to notify the following:

- (a) Fire department
- (b) Appropriate airport tower
- (c) Emergency medical services (EMS)

### **434.6 CONTROLLING ACCESS AND SCENE AUTHORITY**

Prior to NTSB arrival, scene access should be limited to authorized personnel from the:

- (a) FAA.
- (b) Fire department, EMS or other assisting law enforcement agencies.
- (c) Forensic Pathologist/Medical Examiner.
- (d) Air Carrier/Operators investigative teams with NTSB approval.
- (e) Appropriate branch of the military, when applicable.
- (f) Other emergency services agencies (e.g., hazardous materials teams, biohazard decontamination teams, fuel recovery specialists, explosive ordnance disposal specialists).

The NTSB has primary responsibility for investigating accidents involving civil aircraft. In the case of a military aircraft accident, the appropriate branch of the military will have primary investigation responsibility.

After the NTSB or military representative arrives on-scene, the efforts of this [department/office] will shift to a support role for those agencies.

If NTSB or a military representative determines that an aircraft or accident does not qualify under its jurisdiction, the on-scene [department/office] supervisor should ensure the accident is still appropriately investigated and documented.

### **434.7 DANGEROUS MATERIALS**

Members should be aware of potentially dangerous materials that might be present. These may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Fuel, chemicals, explosives, biological or radioactive materials and bombs or other ordnance.
- (b) Pressure vessels, compressed gas bottles, accumulators and tires.

## *Aircraft Accidents*

---

- (c) Fluids, batteries, flares and igniters.
- (d) Evacuation chutes, ballistic parachute systems and composite materials.

### **434.8 DOCUMENTATION**

All aircraft accidents occurring within the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department shall be documented. At a minimum the documentation should include the date, time and location of the incident; any witness statements, if taken; the names of MCSO members deployed to assist; other County resources that were utilized; and cross reference information to other investigating agencies. Suspected criminal activity should be documented on the appropriate crime report.

#### **434.8.1 WRECKAGE**

When reasonably safe, members should:

- (a) Obtain the aircraft registration number (N number) and note the type of aircraft.
- (b) Attempt to ascertain the number of casualties.
- (c) Obtain photographs or video of the overall wreckage, including the cockpit and damage, starting at the initial point of impact, if possible, and any ground scars or marks made by the aircraft.
  - 1. Military aircraft may contain classified equipment and therefore shall not be photographed unless authorized by a military commanding officer (18 USC § 795).
- (d) Secure, if requested by the lead authority, any electronic data or video recorders from the aircraft that became dislodged or cell phones or other recording devices that are part of the wreckage.
- (e) Acquire copies of any recordings from security cameras that may have captured the incident.

#### **434.8.2 WITNESSES**

Members tasked with contacting witnesses should obtain:

- (a) The location of the witness at the time of his/her observation relative to the accident site.
- (b) A detailed description of what was observed or heard.
- (c) Any photographs or recordings of the accident witnesses may be willing to voluntarily surrender.
- (d) The names of all persons reporting the accident, even if not yet interviewed.
- (e) Any audio recordings of reports to 9-1-1 regarding the accident and dispatch records.

### **434.9 MEDIA RELATIONS**

The Public Information Officer ([PIO]) should coordinate a response to the media, including access issues, road closures, detours and any safety information that is pertinent to the surrounding community. Any release of information regarding details of the accident itself should

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Aircraft Accidents*

---

be coordinated with the NTSB or other authority who may have assumed responsibility for the investigation.

Depending on the type of aircraft, the airline or the military may be responsible for family notifications and the release of victims' names. The [PIO] should coordinate with other involved entities before the release of information.

# Field Training Officer Program

## 436.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Field Training Officer Program is intended to provide a standardized program to facilitate the deputy's transition from the academic setting to the actual performance of general law enforcement duties of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

It is the policy of this department to assign all new sheriff's deputies to a structured Field Training Officer Program that is designed to prepare the new deputy to perform in a patrol assignment, and possessing all skills needed to operate in a safe, productive and professional manner.

## 436.2 FIELD TRAINING OFFICER - SELECTION AND TRAINING

The Field Training Officer (FTO) is an experienced deputy trained in the art of supervising, training and evaluating entry level and lateral sheriff's deputies in the application of their previously acquired knowledge and skills.

### 436.2.1 SELECTION PROCESS

FTO's will be selected based on the following requirements:

- a. Desire to be an FTO
- b. Demonstrated ability as a positive role model
- c. Evaluation by supervisors and current FTO's
- d. Possess a POST Basic certificate

### 436.2.2 TRAINING

A deputy selected as a Field Training Officer shall successfully complete a POST certified (40-hour) Field Training Officer's Course prior to being assigned as an FTO.

All FTO's must complete a 24-hour Field Training Officer update course every three years while assigned to the position of FTO (11 CCR 1004).

All FTO's must meet any training mandate regarding crisis intervention behavioral health training pursuant to Penal Code § 13515.28.

## 436.3 FIELD TRAINING OFFICER PROGRAM SUPERVISOR

The FTO Program supervisor should be selected from the rank of sergeant.

The responsibilities of the FTO Program supervisor include the following:

- (a) Assignment of trainees to FTOs
- (b) Conduct FTO meetings
- (c) Maintain and ensure FTO/trainee performance evaluations are completed
- (d) Maintain, update and issue the Field Training Manual to each trainee

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Field Training Officer Program*

---

- (e) Monitor individual FTO performance
- (f) Monitor overall FTO Program
- (g) Maintain liaison with FTO coordinators of other agencies
- (h) Maintain liaison with academy staff on recruit performance during the academy
- (i) Develop ongoing training for FTOs

The FTO Program supervisor will be required to successfully complete a POST approved Field Training Administrator's Course within one year of appointment to this position (11 CCR 1004(c)).

#### **436.4 TRAINEE DEFINED**

Any entry level or lateral sheriff's deputy newly appointed to the Merced County Sheriff's Office who has successfully completed a POST approved Basic Academy.

#### **436.5 REQUIRED TRAINING**

Entry level deputies shall be required to successfully complete the Field Training Program, consisting of a minimum of 10 weeks.

The training period for a lateral deputy may be modified depending on the trainee's demonstrated performance and level of experience, but shall consist of a minimum of eight weeks.

To the extent practicable, entry level and lateral deputies should be assigned to a variety of Field Training Officers, shifts and geographical areas during their Field Training Program.

##### **436.5.1 FIELD TRAINING MANUAL**

Each new deputy will be issued a Field Training Manual at the beginning of his/her Primary Training Phase. This manual is an outline of the subject matter and/or skills necessary to properly function as a deputy with the Merced County Sheriff's Office. The deputy shall become knowledgeable of the subject matter as outlined. He/she shall also become proficient with those skills as set forth in the manual.

The Field Training Manual will specifically cover those policies, procedures, rules and regulations adopted by the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

#### **436.6 EVALUATIONS**

Evaluations are an important component of the training process and shall be completed as outlined below.

##### **436.6.1 FIELD TRAINING OFFICER**

The FTO will be responsible for the following:

- (a) Complete and submit a written evaluation on the performance of his/her assigned trainee to the FTO Coordinator on a daily basis.
- (b) Review the Daily Trainee Performance Evaluations with the trainee each day.

## *Field Training Officer Program*

---

- (c) Complete a detailed end-of-phase performance evaluation on his/her assigned trainee at the end of each phase of training.
- (d) Sign off all completed topics contained in the Field Training Manual, noting the method(s) of learning and evaluating the performance of his/her assigned trainee.

### **436.6.2 IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR**

The FTO supervisor or their designee shall review and approve the Daily Trainee Performance Evaluations and forward them to the Field Training Administrator.

### **436.6.3 FIELD TRAINING ADMINISTRATOR**

The Field Training Administrator will review and approve the Daily Trainee Performance Evaluations submitted by the FTO through his/her immediate supervisor.

### **436.6.4 TRAINEE**

At the completion of the Field Training Program, the trainee shall submit a confidential performance evaluation on each of their FTO's and on the Field Training Program.

## **436.7 DOCUMENTATION**

All documentation of the Field Training Program will be retained in the deputy's training files and will consist of the following:

- (a) Daily Trainee Performance Evaluations
- (b) End of phase evaluations
- (c) A Certificate of Completion certifying that the trainee has successfully completed the required number of hours of field training

### **436.7.1 RETENTION OF RECORDS**

All documentation of a deputy's training shall be retained for a minimum of two (2) years after the respective deputy leaves the employment of this department at any time after beginning employment and for whatever reason for discharge. Purging of these records shall be subject to the requirements of Policy # 1026.8 (Purging of Files)

## Obtaining Aircraft Support

### 438.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The use of the Sheriff's aircraft resources, both fixed-wing and helicopter, can be invaluable in certain situations. This policy specifies potential situations where the use of aircraft may be requested and the responsibilities for making a request.

### 438.2 REQUEST FOR HELICOPTER ASSISTANCE

If a supervisor or deputy in charge of an incident determines that the use of aircraft would be beneficial, a request to obtain such assistance may be made. The Aviation Unit Manager is responsible for selecting the type of aircraft that is available and appropriate to meet the needs of the particular request.

#### 438.2.1 REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE FROM ANOTHER AGENCY

Requests for the department's aircraft will be made through the Aviation Unit Commander or the Operations Division Captain.

#### 438.2.2 CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH AID MAY BE REQUESTED

The Sheriff's aircraft may be requested under any of the following conditions:

- (a) When the aircraft is activated under existing mutual aid agreements
- (b) Whenever the safety of law enforcement personnel is in jeopardy and the presence of the aircraft may reduce such hazard
- (c) When the use of the aircraft will aid in the capture of a suspected fleeing felon whose continued freedom represents an ongoing threat to the community
- (d) When aircraft is needed to locate a person who has strayed or is lost and whose continued absence constitutes a serious health or safety hazard
- (e) Vehicle pursuits

While it is recognized that the availability of aircraft support will generally provide valuable assistance to ground personnel, the presence of aircraft will rarely replace the need for deputies on the ground.

#### 438.2.3 RECORDING PROCEDURES BY AIRCRAFT

The department's aircraft are equipped with advanced video recording systems. The department's helicopter (SABLE-2) is equipped with both an advanced video recording system and a FLIR (Forward Looking Infrared) system. These technologically advanced systems allow SABLE-2 to clearly record, in all weather and lighting conditions whether day or night, incidents during which its support is utilized (i.e., vehicle pursuits, foot pursuits, etc.). The capability to record such incidents is very important as the recording may be used as evidence in either a criminal or civil proceeding. When practical, the following procedures will apply:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Obtaining Aircraft Support*

---

- When the aircraft decides to record an incident, the crew shall alert all involved personnel, by radio, that the incident is being recorded (i.e., "tape is rolling").
- A field supervisor, based on circumstances, may also request the aircraft to record an incident.
- The incident dispatcher shall repeat the recording advisement to personnel. Involved personnel are not to acknowledge this advisement so as to keep the radio frequency clear.
- When the incident is no longer being recorded, the aircraft crew shall advise involved personnel that recording has been terminated.
- The case deputy shall be responsible for impounding the recording in accordance with existing Department Policy.

## Detentions And Photographing Detainees

### 440.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for conducting field interviews (FI) and pat-down searches, and the taking and retention of photographs of persons detained in the field but not arrested. Due to a variety of situations confronting the deputy, the decision to FI or photograph a field detainee shall be left to the discretion of the involved deputy based on the totality of the circumstances available to them at the time of the detention.

### 440.2 DEFINITIONS

**Detention** - Occurs when a deputy intentionally, through words, actions or physical force causes an individual to reasonably believe he/she is being required to restrict his/her movement. Detentions also occur when a deputy actually restrains a person's freedom of movement.

**Consensual Encounter** - Occurs when a deputy contacts an individual but does not create a detention through words, actions or other means. In other words, a reasonable individual would believe that his/her contact with the deputy is voluntary.

**Field Interview** - The brief detainment of an individual, whether on foot or in a vehicle, based on reasonable suspicion for the purposes of determining the individual's identity and resolving the deputy's suspicions.

**Field Photographs** - Field photographs are defined as posed photographs taken of a person during a contact, detention, or arrest in the field. Undercover surveillance photographs of an individual and recordings captured by the normal operation of a Mobile Audio Video (MAV) system when persons are not posed for the purpose of photographing are not considered field photographs.

**Pat-Down Search** - This type of search is used by deputies in the field to check an individual for weapons. It involves a thorough patting down of clothing to locate any weapons or dangerous items that could pose a danger to the deputy, the detainee, or others.

**Reasonable Suspicion** - Occurs when, under the totality of the circumstances, a deputy has articulable facts that criminal activity may be afoot and a particular person is connected with that possible criminal activity.

### 440.3 FIELD INTERVIEWS

Deputies may stop individuals for the purpose of conducting an FI where reasonable suspicion is present. In justifying the stop, the deputy should be able to point to specific facts which, when taken together with rational inferences, reasonably warrant the stop. Such facts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) The appearance or demeanor of an individual suggests that he/she is part of a criminal enterprise or is engaged in a criminal act.

## *Detentions And Photographing Detainees*

---

- (b) The actions of the suspect suggest that he/she is engaged in a criminal activity.
- (c) The hour of day or night is inappropriate for the suspect's presence in the area.
- (d) The suspect's presence in the particular area is suspicious.
- (e) The suspect is carrying a suspicious object.
- (f) The suspect's clothing bulges in a manner that suggests he/she is carrying a weapon.
- (g) The suspect is located in proximate time and place to an alleged crime.
- (h) The deputy has knowledge of the suspect's prior criminal record or involvement in criminal activity.

### 440.3.1 INITIATING A FIELD INTERVIEW

A deputy may initiate the stop of a person when there is articulable, reasonable suspicion to do so. A person however, should not be detained longer than is reasonably necessary to resolve the deputy's suspicions.

Nothing in this policy is intended to discourage consensual contacts. Frequent and random casual contacts with consenting individuals are encouraged by the Merced County Sheriff's Office to strengthen our community involvement, community awareness and problem identification.

### 440.3.2 WITNESS IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVIEWS

Because potential witnesses to an incident may become unavailable or the integrity of their statements compromised with the passage of time, deputies should, when warranted by the seriousness of the case, take reasonable steps to promptly coordinate with an on-scene supervisor and/or criminal investigators to utilize available personnel for the following:

- (a) Identify all persons present at the scene and in the immediate area.
  - 1. When feasible, a recorded statement should be obtained from those persons who claim not to have witnessed the incident but who were present at the time it occurred.
  - 2. Any potential witness who is unwilling or unable to remain available for a formal interview should not be detained absent reasonable suspicion to detain or probable cause to arrest. Without detaining the individual for the sole purpose of identification, deputies should attempt to identify the witness prior to his/her departure.
- (b) Witnesses who are willing to provide a formal interview should be asked to meet at a suitable location where criminal investigators may obtain a recorded statement. Such witnesses, if willing, may be transported by department personnel.
  - 1. A written, verbal or recorded statement of consent should be obtained prior to transporting a witness in a department vehicle. When the witness is a minor,

## *Detentions And Photographing Detainees*

---

consent should be obtained from the parent or guardian, if available, prior to transportation.

### **440.4 PAT-DOWN SEARCHES**

A pat-down search of a detained subject may be conducted whenever a deputy reasonably believes that the person may possess an object that can be utilized as an offensive weapon or whenever the deputy has a reasonable fear for his/her own safety or the safety of others. Circumstances that may establish justification for performing a pat-down search include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) The type of crime suspected, particularly in crimes of violence where the use or threat of deadly weapons is involved.
- (b) Where more than one suspect must be handled by a single deputy.
- (c) The hour of the day and the location or neighborhood where the stop takes place.
- (d) Prior knowledge of the suspect's use of force and/or propensity to carry deadly weapons.
- (e) The appearance and demeanor of the suspect.
- (f) Visual indications which suggest that the suspect is carrying a firearm or other weapon.
- (g) The age and gender of the suspect.

Whenever possible, pat-down searches should be performed by deputies of the same gender.

### **440.5 FIELD PHOTOGRAPHS**

Before photographing any field detainee, the deputy shall carefully consider, among other things, the factors listed below.

#### **440.5.1 FIELD PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN WITH CONSENT**

Field photographs may be taken when the subject of the photograph knowingly and voluntarily gives consent. When taking a consensual photograph, the deputy should have the individual read and sign the appropriate form accompanying the photograph.

#### **440.5.2 FIELD PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN WITHOUT CONSENT**

Field photographs may be taken without consent only if they are taken during a detention that is based upon reasonable suspicion of criminal activity, and the photograph serves a legitimate law enforcement purpose related to the detention. Mere knowledge or suspicion of gang membership or affiliation is not a sufficient justification for taking a photograph without consent. The deputy must be able to articulate facts that reasonably indicate that the subject was involved in or was about to become involved in criminal conduct.

If, prior to taking a photograph, the deputy's reasonable suspicion of criminal activity has been dispelled, the detention must cease and the photograph should not be taken.

## *Detentions And Photographing Detainees*

---

All field photographs and related reports shall be submitted to a supervisor and retained in compliance with this policy.

### **440.6 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

While it is recognized that field photographs often become valuable investigative tools, supervisors should monitor such practices in view of the above listed considerations. This is not to imply that supervisor approval is required before each photograph. Access to field photographs shall be strictly limited to law enforcement purposes.

### **440.7 DISPOSITION OF PHOTOGRAPHS**

All detainee photographs must be adequately labeled and logged into evidence with either an associated FI card or other memorandum explaining the nature of the contact. If an individual is photographed as a suspect in a particular crime, the photograph should be submitted as an evidence item in the related case, following standard evidence procedures.

If a photograph is not associated with an investigation where a case number has been issued, the investigating deputy should review and forward the photograph to one of the following locations:

- (a) If the photo and associated FI or memorandum is relevant to criminal street gang enforcement, the investigating deputy will forward the photo and documents to the Investigations Supervisor. The Investigations Supervisor will ensure the photograph and supporting documents are retained as evidence.
- (b) Photographs that do not qualify for Criminal Street Gang file retention or which are not evidence in an investigation with an assigned case number should be logged into evidence. These photographs will be purged in accordance with county records retention policy.

When a photograph is taken in association with a particular case, the detective may use such photograph in a photo lineup. Thereafter, the individual photograph should be retained as a part of the case file. All other photographs will be logged into evidence.

#### **440.7.1 PURGING THE FIELD PHOTO FILE**

The Detectives Division and/or Gang Intelligence Deputy will be responsible for ensuring that photographs maintained by the Records Division that are more than one year old and no longer serve a law enforcement purpose are periodically purged and destroyed. Photographs that continue to serve a legitimate law enforcement purpose may be retained longer than one year provided that a notation of that fact is added to the file for each additional year that they are retained. Access to the FI photo file shall be strictly limited to law enforcement purposes.

A photograph need not be purged but may be retained as an updated photograph in a prior booking file if the person depicted in the photograph has been booked at the Merced County Sheriff's Office and the booking file remains in the Records Division.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Detentions And Photographing Detainees*

---

#### **440.8 PHOTO REVIEW POLICY**

Any person who has been the subject of a field photograph or an FI by this agency during any contact other than an arrest may file a written request within 30 days of the contact requesting a review of the status of the photograph/FI. The request shall be directed to the office of the Sheriff who will ensure that the status of the photograph or FI is properly reviewed according to this policy as described below. Upon a verbal request, the Department will send a request form to the requesting party along with a copy of this policy.

##### **440.8.1 REVIEW PROCESS**

Upon receipt of such a written request, the Sheriff or his or her designee will permit the individual to appear in person (any minor must be accompanied by their parent or legal guardian) for a review of the status of the photograph/FI.

Such a meeting will generally be scheduled during regular business hours within 30 days of the receipt of the written request. An extension of the 30-day limit may be made either upon the mutual convenience of the parties or if, at the discretion of the Sheriff, there appears to be an ongoing legitimate law enforcement interest which warrants a delay. If the delay could jeopardize an ongoing investigation, nothing in this policy shall require the Sheriff to disclose the reason(s) for the delay.

A meeting for the review of the status of any non-arrest photograph/FI is not intended to be a formal hearing, but simply an informal opportunity for the individual to meet with the Sheriff or his/her designee to discuss the matter.

After carefully considering the information available, the Sheriff or designee will determine, generally within 30 days of the original meeting, whether the photograph/FI was obtained in accordance with existing law and Merced County Sheriff's Office policy and, even if properly obtained, then whether there is any ongoing legitimate law enforcement interest in retaining the photograph/FI.

If the Sheriff or his/her designee determines that the photograph/FI was obtained in accordance with existing law and department policy and that there is an ongoing legitimate law enforcement interest in retaining the non-arrest photograph, the photograph/FI shall be retained according to this policy and applicable law.

If the Sheriff or his/her designee determines that the original legitimate law enforcement interest in retaining a non-arrest photograph no longer exists or that it was obtained in violation of existing law or Merced County Sheriff's Office policy, the original photograph will be destroyed or returned to the person photographed, if requested. All other associated reports or documents, however, will be retained according to department policy and applicable law.

If the Sheriff or his/her designee determines that the original legitimate law enforcement interest in retaining a non-arrest FI no longer exists or that the original FI was not obtained in accordance with established law or Merced County Sheriff's Office policy, the original FI may only be destroyed upon the execution of a full and complete waiver of liability by the individual (and guardian if a minor) arising out of that field contact.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Detentions And Photographing Detainees*

---

If the Sheriff or his/her designee determines that any involved Merced County Sheriff's Office personnel violated existing law or department policy, the Sheriff or designee shall initiate a separate internal investigation which may result in additional training, discipline or other appropriate action for the involved employees.

The person photographed/FI'd will be informed in writing within 30 days of the Sheriff's determination whether or not the photograph/FI will be retained. This does not entitle any person to any discovery or access to any law enforcement records not otherwise authorized by law.

# Criminal Organizations

## 442.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that the Merced County Sheriff's Office appropriately utilizes criminal intelligence systems and temporary information files to support investigations of criminal organizations and enterprises.

### 442.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Criminal intelligence system** - Any record system that receives, stores, exchanges or disseminates information that has been evaluated and determined to be relevant to the identification of a criminal organization or enterprise, its members or affiliates. This does not include temporary information files.

## 442.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes that certain criminal activities, including but not limited to gang crimes and drug trafficking, often involve some degree of regular coordination and may involve a large number of participants over a broad geographical area.

It is the policy of this [department/office] to collect and share relevant information while respecting the privacy and legal rights of the public.

## 442.3 CRIMINAL INTELLIGENCE SYSTEMS

No [department/office] member may create, submit to or obtain information from a criminal intelligence system unless the Sheriff has approved the system for [department/office] use.

Any criminal intelligence system approved for [department/office] use should meet or exceed the standards of 28 CFR 23.20.

A designated supervisor will be responsible for maintaining each criminal intelligence system that has been approved for [department/office] use. The supervisor or the authorized designee should ensure the following:

- (a) Members using any such system are appropriately selected and trained.
- (b) Use of every criminal intelligence system is appropriately reviewed and audited.
- (c) Any system security issues are reasonably addressed.

### 442.3.1 SYSTEM ENTRIES

It is the designated supervisor's responsibility to approve the entry of any information from a report, field interview (FI), photo or other relevant document into an authorized criminal intelligence system. If entries are made based upon information that is not on file with this [department/office], such as open or public source documents or documents that are on file at another agency, the designated supervisor should ensure copies of those documents are retained by the Records

## *Criminal Organizations*

---

Division. Any supporting documentation for an entry shall be retained by the Records Division in accordance with the established records retention schedule and for at least as long as the entry is maintained in the system.

The designated supervisor should ensure that any documents retained by the Records Division are appropriately marked as intelligence information. The Records Supervisor may not purge such documents without the approval of the designated supervisor.

### 442.3.2 GANG DATABASES

The Sheriff may approve participation by the gang unit in a shared criminal gang intelligence database, such as CALGANG®. Members must obtain the requisite training before accessing any such database.

It is the gang unit supervisor's responsibility to determine whether any report or FI contains information that would qualify for entry into the database. Prior to designating any person as a suspected gang member, associate or affiliate in a shared gang database; or submitting a document to the Attorney General's office for the purpose of designating a person in a shared gang database; or otherwise identifying the person in a shared gang database, the gang unit supervisor shall provide written notice to the person and, if the person is under the age of 18, to his/her parent or guardian of the designation and the basis for the designation, unless providing that notification would compromise an active criminal investigation or compromise the health or safety of a minor. Notice shall also describe the process to contest the designation (Penal Code § 186.34).

The person, an attorney working on his/her behalf or his/her parent or guardian (if the person is under 18 years of age) may request, in writing, information as to whether the person is designated as a suspected gang member, associate or affiliate in a shared gang database accessible by the [department/office], the basis for that designation and the name of the agency that made the designation. The [department/office] shall respond to a valid request in writing within 30 days, and shall provide the information requested unless doing so would compromise an active investigation or compromise the health and safety of the person if he/she is under 18 years of age (Penal Code § 186.34).

The person, or his/her parent or guardian if the person is under 18 years of age, may contest the designation by submitting written documentation which shall be reviewed by the gang unit supervisor. If it is determined that the person is not a suspected gang member, associate or affiliate, the person shall be removed from the database. The person and the parent or guardian shall be provided written verification of the [department/office]'s decision within 30 days of receipt of the written documentation contesting the designation and shall include the reason for a denial when applicable (Penal Code § 186.34).

The gang unit supervisor should forward reports or FIs to the Records Division after appropriate database entries are made. The supervisor should clearly mark the report/FI as gang intelligence information.

## *Criminal Organizations*

---

It is the responsibility of the Records Division supervisor to retain reports and FIs in compliance with the database rules and any applicable end user agreement.

Records contained in a shared gang database shall not be disclosed for employment or military screening purposes, and shall not be disclosed for the purpose of enforcing federal immigration law unless required by state or federal statute or regulation (Penal Code § 186.36).

### **442.3.3 REPORT TO THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

The Investigation Captain or the authorized designee shall ensure that the annual report of information submitted to a shared gang database as required by Penal Code § 186.34 is submitted to the California Department of Justice.

### **442.4 TEMPORARY INFORMATION FILE**

No member may create or keep files on individuals that are separate from the approved criminal intelligence system. However, members may maintain temporary information that is necessary to actively investigate whether a person or group qualifies for entry into the [department/office]-approved criminal intelligence system only as provided in this section. Once information qualifies for inclusion, it should be submitted to the supervisor responsible for consideration of criminal intelligence system entries.

#### **442.4.1 FILE CONTENTS**

A temporary information file may only contain information and documents that, within one year, will have a reasonable likelihood to meet the criteria for entry into an authorized criminal intelligence system.

Information and documents contained in a temporary information file:

- (a) Must only be included upon documented authorization of the responsible [department/office] supervisor.
- (b) Should not be originals that would ordinarily be retained by the Records Division or Evidence Room, but should be copies of, or references to, retained documents such as copies of reports, FI forms, Dispatch records or booking forms.
- (c) Shall not include opinions. No person, organization or enterprise shall be labeled as being involved in crime beyond what is already in the document or information.
- (d) May include information collected from publicly available sources or references to documents on file with another government agency. Attribution identifying the source should be retained with the information.

#### **442.4.2 FILE REVIEW AND PURGING**

The contents of a temporary information file shall not be retained longer than one year. At the end of one year, the contents must be purged.

The designated supervisor shall periodically review the temporary information files to verify that the contents meet the criteria for retention. Validation and purging of files is the responsibility of the supervisor.

## *Criminal Organizations*

---

### **442.5 INFORMATION RECOGNITION**

[Department/Office] members should document facts that suggest an individual, organization or enterprise is involved in criminal activity and should forward that information appropriately. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Gang indicia associated with a person or residence.
- (b) Information related to a drug-trafficking operation.
- (c) Vandalism indicating an animus for a particular group.
- (d) Information related to an illegal gambling operation.

[Department/Office] supervisors who utilize an authorized criminal intelligence system should work with the Training Manager to train members to identify information that may be particularly relevant for inclusion.

### **442.6 RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

[Department/Office] members shall comply with the rules of an authorized criminal intelligence system regarding inquiries and release of information.

Information from a temporary information file may only be furnished to [department/office] members and other law enforcement agencies on a need-to-know basis and consistent with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

When an inquiry is made by the parent or guardian of a juvenile as to whether that juvenile's name is in a temporary information file, such information should be provided by the supervisor responsible for the temporary information file, unless there is good cause to believe that the release of such information might jeopardize an ongoing criminal investigation.

### **442.7 CRIMINAL STREET GANGS**

The Detective Unit supervisor should ensure that there are an appropriate number of [department/office] members who can:

- (a) Testify as experts on matters related to criminal street gangs, and maintain an above average familiarity with:
  - 1. Any organization, associate or group of three or more persons that meets the definition of a criminal street gang under Penal Code § 186.22(f).
  - 2. Identification of a person as a criminal street gang member and criminal street gang-related crimes.
  - 3. The California Street Terrorism Enforcement and Prevention Act (Penal Code § 186.21 et seq.), associated crimes and what defines a criminal street gang (Penal Code § 186.22).

## *Criminal Organizations*

---

- (b) Coordinate with other agencies in the region regarding criminal street gang-related crimes and information.
- (c) Train other members to identify gang indicia and investigate criminal street gang-related crimes.

### **442.8 TRAINING**

The Training Manager should provide training on best practices in the use of each authorized criminal intelligence system to those tasked with investigating criminal organizations and enterprises. Training should include:

- (a) The protection of civil liberties.
- (b) Participation in a multiagency criminal intelligence system.
- (c) Submission of information into a multiagency criminal intelligence system or the receipt of information from such a system, including any governing federal and state rules and statutes.
- (d) The type of information appropriate for entry into a criminal intelligence system or temporary information file.
- (e) The review and purging of temporary information files.

#### **442.8.1 GANG GRAFFITI TRACKING**

Photographing gang related graffiti is mandatory. Criminal prosecution of gangs requires photographs of the graffiti to show conflict, disrespect and threats against individuals and their gangs. If no photographs are taken, the deputy shall explain the circumstances per the appropriate reporting procedure.

## Supervisor Availability

### **444.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Each patrol shift must be directed by supervisors who are capable of making decisions and communicating in a manner consistent with departmental policies, procedures, practices, functions and objectives. To accomplish this goal, a Sergeant or designated Officer in Charge heads each shift.

When each area station has a supervisor on duty, that supervisor will be responsible for his or her assigned geographic area.

#### **444.1.1 SUPERVISOR ON DUTY**

At least one Sergeant will be on duty during all shifts. Sergeants should limit assigning an officer-in-charge unless all reasonable efforts to schedule a sergeant for the shift have been exhausted. The Operations Division Captain shall be notified when a sergeant is unavailable for patrol.

### **444.2 DESIGNATION AS OFFICER IN CHARGE**

When a Sergeant is unavailable for duty as shift supervisor, the most senior qualified deputy may be designated as Officer in Charge (OIC) and act as the shift supervisor. This policy does not preclude designating a less senior deputy as an acting shift supervisor subject to operational needs. Sergeants will limit the use of Officers In Charge. OIC's may only be used when all efforts to schedule a sergeant to work have been exhausted.

## Mobile Audio/Video

### 446.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Merced County Sheriff's Office has equipped marked patrol cars with Mobile Audio/Video (MAV) recording systems to provide records of events and assist deputies in the performance of their duties. This policy provides guidance on the use of these systems.

#### 446.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Activate** - Any process that causes the MAV system to transmit or store video or audio data in an active mode.

**In-car camera system and Mobile Audio/Video (MAV) system** - Synonymous terms which refer to any system that captures audio and video signals, that is capable of installation in a vehicle, and that includes at minimum, a camera, microphone, recorder and monitor.

**MAV technician** - Personnel certified or trained in the operational use and repair of MAVs, duplicating methods, storage and retrieval methods and procedures, and who have a working knowledge of video forensics and evidentiary procedures.

**Recorded media** - Audio-video signals recorded or digitally stored on a storage device or portable media.

### 446.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to use mobile audio and video technology to more effectively fulfill the department's mission and to ensure these systems are used securely and efficiently.

### 446.3 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Prior to going into service, each deputy will properly equip him/herself to record audio and video in the field. At the end of the shift, each deputy will follow the established procedures for providing to the Department any recordings or used media and any other related equipment. Each deputy should have adequate recording media for the entire duty assignment. In the event a deputy works at a remote location and reports in only periodically, additional recording media may be issued. Only Merced County Sheriff's Office identified and labeled media with tracking numbers is to be used.

At the start of each shift, deputies should test the MAV system's operation in accordance with manufacturer specifications and department operating procedures and training.

System documentation is accomplished by the deputy recording his/her name, serial number, badge or PIN number and the current date and time at the start and again at the end of each shift. If the system is malfunctioning, the deputy shall take the vehicle out of service unless a supervisor requests the vehicle remain in service.

## *Mobile Audio/Video*

---

### **446.4 ACTIVATION OF THE MAV**

The MAV system is designed to turn on whenever the unit's emergency lights are activated. The system remains on until it is turned off manually. The audio portion is independently controlled and should be activated manually by the deputy whenever appropriate. When audio is being recorded, the video will also record.

#### **446.4.1 REQUIRED ACTIVATION OF MAV**

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation in which the MAV system may be used, although there are many situations where its use is appropriate. A deputy may activate the system any time the deputy believes it would be appropriate or valuable to document an incident.

In some circumstances it is not possible to capture images of the incident due to conditions or the location of the camera. However, the audio portion can be valuable evidence and is subject to the same activation requirements as the MAV. The MAV system should be activated in any of the following situations:

- (a) All field contacts involving actual or potential criminal conduct within video or audio range:
  - 1. Traffic stops (to include, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops)
  - 2. Priority responses
  - 3. Vehicle pursuits
  - 4. Suspicious vehicles
  - 5. Arrests
  - 6. Vehicle searches
  - 7. Physical or verbal confrontations or use of force
  - 8. Pedestrian checks
  - 9. DWI/DUI investigations including field sobriety tests
  - 10. Consensual encounters
  - 11. Crimes in progress
  - 12. Responding to an in-progress call
- (b) All self-initiated activity in which a deputy would normally notify Dispatch
- (c) Any call for service involving a crime where the recorder may aid in the apprehension and/or prosecution of a suspect:
  - 1. Domestic violence calls
  - 2. Disturbance of peace calls

## *Mobile Audio/Video*

---

### 3. Offenses involving violence or weapons

- (d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording
- (e) Any other circumstance where the deputy believes that a recording of an incident would be appropriate

#### 446.4.2 CESSATION OF RECORDING

Once activated, the MAV system should remain on until the incident has concluded. For purposes of this section, conclusion of an incident has occurred when all arrests have been made, arrestees have been transported and all witnesses and victims have been interviewed. Recording may cease if a deputy is simply waiting for a tow truck or a family member to arrive, or in other similar situations.

Members shall cease audio recording whenever necessary to ensure conversations are not recorded between a person in custody and the person's attorney, religious advisor or physician, unless there is explicit consent from all parties to the conversation (Penal Code § 636).

#### 446.4.3 WHEN ACTIVATION IS NOT REQUIRED

Activation of the MAV system is not required when exchanging information with other deputies or during breaks, lunch periods, when not in service or actively on patrol.

No member of this department may surreptitiously record a conversation of any other member of this department except with a court order or when lawfully authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee for the purpose of conducting a criminal or administrative investigation.

#### 446.4.4 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors should determine if vehicles with non-functioning MAV systems should be placed into service. If these vehicles are placed into service, the appropriate documentation should be made, including notification of Dispatch.

At reasonable intervals, supervisors should validate that:

- (a) Beginning and end-of-shift recording procedures are followed.
- (b) Logs reflect the proper chain of custody, including:
  - 1. The tracking number of the MAV system media.
  - 2. The date it was issued.
  - 3. The law enforcement operator or the vehicle to which it was issued.
  - 4. The date it was submitted.
  - 5. Law enforcement operators submitting the media.
  - 6. Holds for evidence indication and tagging as required.

## *Mobile Audio/Video*

---

- (c) The operation of MAV systems by new employees is assessed and reviewed no less than biweekly.

When an incident arises that requires the immediate retrieval of the recorded media (e.g., serious crime scenes, officer-involved shootings, department-involved collisions), a supervisor shall respond to the scene and ensure that the appropriate supervisor, MAV technician or crime scene investigator properly retrieves the recorded media. The media may need to be treated as evidence and should be handled in accordance with current evidence procedures for recorded media.

Supervisors may activate the MAV system remotely to monitor a developing situation, such as a chase, riot or an event that may threaten public safety, officer safety or both, when the purpose is to obtain tactical information to assist in managing the event. Supervisors shall not remotely activate the MAV system for the purpose of monitoring the conversations or actions of a deputy.

### **446.5 REVIEW OF MAV RECORDINGS**

All recording media, recorded images and audio recordings are the property of the Department. Dissemination outside of the agency is strictly prohibited, except to the extent permitted or required by law.

To prevent damage to, or alteration of, the original recorded media, it shall not be copied, viewed or otherwise inserted into any device not approved by the department MAV technician or forensic media staff. When reasonably possible, a copy of the original media shall be used for viewing (unless otherwise directed by the courts) to preserve the original media.

Recordings may be reviewed in any of the following situations:

- (a) For use when preparing reports or statements
- (b) By a supervisor investigating a specific act of deputy conduct
- (c) By a supervisor to assess deputy performance
- (d) To assess proper functioning of MAV systems
- (e) By department investigators who are participating in an official investigation, such as a personnel complaint, administrative inquiry or a criminal investigation
- (f) By department personnel who request to review recordings
- (g) By a deputy who is captured on or referenced in the video or audio data and reviews and uses such data for any purpose relating to his/her employment
- (h) By court personnel through proper process or with permission of the Sheriff or the authorized designee
- (i) By the media through proper process or with permission of the Sheriff or the authorized designee
- (j) To assess possible training value

## *Mobile Audio/Video*

---

- (k) Recordings may be shown for training purposes. If an involved deputy objects to showing a recording, his/her objection will be submitted to the staff to determine if the training value outweighs the deputy's objection

Employees desiring to view any previously uploaded or archived MAV recording should submit a request in writing to their Area Lieutenant. Approved requests should be forwarded to the MAV technician for processing.

In no event shall any recording be used or shown for the purpose of ridiculing or embarrassing any employee.

### **446.6 DOCUMENTING MAV USE**

If any incident is recorded with either the video or audio system, the existence of that recording shall be documented in the deputy's report. If a citation is issued, the deputy shall make a notation on the back of the records copy of the citation, indicating that the incident was recorded.

### **446.7 RECORDING MEDIA STORAGE AND INTEGRITY**

Once submitted for storage, all recording media will be labeled and stored in a designated secure area. All recording media that is not booked as evidence will be retained for a minimum of one year after which time it will be erased, destroyed or recycled in accordance with the established records retention schedule (Government Code § 34090.6).

#### **446.7.1 COPIES OF ORIGINAL RECORDING MEDIA**

Original recording media shall not be used for any purpose other than for initial review by a supervisor. Upon proper request, a copy of the original recording media will be made for use as authorized in this policy.

Original recording media may only be released in response to a court order or upon approval by the Sheriff or the authorized designee. In the event that an original recording is released to a court, a copy shall be made and placed in storage until the original is returned.

#### **446.7.2 MAV RECORDINGS AS EVIDENCE**

Deputies who reasonably believe that a MAV recording is likely to contain evidence relevant to a criminal offense, potential claim against the deputy or against the Merced County Sheriff's Office should indicate this in an appropriate report. Deputies should ensure relevant recordings are preserved.

### **446.8 SYSTEM OPERATIONAL STANDARDS**

- (a) MAV system vehicle installations should be based on officer safety requirements and the vehicle and device manufacturer's recommendations.
- (b) The MAV system should be configured to minimally record for 30 seconds prior to an event.

## *Mobile Audio/Video*

---

- (c) The MAV system may not be configured to record audio data occurring prior to activation.
- (d) Unless the transmitters being used are designed for synchronized use, only one transmitter, usually the primary initiating deputy's transmitter, should be activated at a scene to minimize interference or noise from other MAV transmitters.
- (e) Deputies using digital transmitters that are synchronized to their individual MAV shall activate both audio and video recordings when responding in a support capacity. This is to obtain additional perspectives of the incident scene.
- (f) With the exception of law enforcement radios or other emergency equipment, other electronic devices should not be used inside MAV-equipped law enforcement vehicles to minimize the possibility of causing electronic or noise interference with the MAV system.
- (g) Deputies shall not erase, alter, reuse, modify or tamper with MAV recordings. Only a supervisor, MAV technician or other authorized designee may erase and reissue previous recordings and may only do so pursuant to the provisions of this policy.
- (h) To prevent damage, original recordings shall not be viewed on any equipment other than the equipment issued or authorized by the MAV technician.

### **446.9 MAV TECHNICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

The MAV technician is responsible for:

- (a) Ordering, issuing, retrieving, storing, erasing and duplicating of all recorded media.
- (b) Collecting all completed media for oversight and verification of wireless downloaded media. Once collected, the MAV technician:
  - 1. Ensures it is stored in a secure location with authorized controlled access.
  - 2. Makes the appropriate entries in the chain of custody log.
- (c) Erasing of media:
  - 1. Pursuant to a court order.
  - 2. In accordance with established records retention policies, including reissuing all other media deemed to be of no evidentiary value.
- (d) Assigning all media an identification number prior to issuance to the field:
  - 1. Maintaining a record of issued media.
- (e) Ensuring that an adequate supply of recording media is available.
- (f) Managing the long-term storage of media that has been deemed to be of evidentiary value in accordance with the department evidence storage protocols and the records retention schedule.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Mobile Audio/Video*

---

### **446.10 TRAINING**

All members who are authorized to use the MAV system shall successfully complete an approved course of instruction prior to its use.

# Mobile Data Computer Use

## 448.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the proper access, use and application of the Mobile Data Computer (MDC) system in order to ensure appropriate access to confidential records from local, state and national law enforcement databases, and to ensure effective electronic communications between department members and Dispatch.

## 448.2 PRIVACY EXPECTATION

Members forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to messages accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any department technology system (see the Information Technology Use Policy for additional guidance).

## 448.3 POLICY

Merced County Sheriff's Office members using the MDC shall comply with all appropriate federal and state rules and regulations and shall use the MDC in a professional manner, in accordance with this policy.

## 448.4 RESTRICTED ACCESS AND USE

MDC use is subject to the Information Technology Use and Protected Information policies.

Members shall not access the MDC system if they have not received prior authorization and the required training. Members shall immediately report unauthorized access or use of the MDC by another member to their supervisors or Area Lieutenant.

Use of the MDC system to access law enforcement databases or transmit messages is restricted to official activities, business-related tasks and communications that are directly related to the business, administration or practices of the Department. In the event that a member has questions about sending a particular message or accessing a particular database, the member should seek prior approval from his/her supervisor.

Sending derogatory, defamatory, obscene, disrespectful, sexually suggestive, harassing or any other inappropriate messages on the MDC system is prohibited and may result in discipline.

It is a violation of this policy to transmit a message or access a law enforcement database under another member's name or to use the password of another member to log in to the MDC system unless directed to do so by a supervisor. Members are required to log off the MDC or secure the MDC when it is unattended. This added security measure will minimize the potential for unauthorized access or misuse.

### 448.4.1 USE WHILE DRIVING

Use of the MDC by the vehicle operator should be limited to times when the vehicle is stopped. Information that is required for immediate enforcement, investigative, tactical or safety needs should be transmitted over the radio.

## *Mobile Data Computer Use*

---

Short transmissions, such as a license plate check, are permitted if it reasonably appears that it can be done safely. In no case shall an operator attempt to send or review lengthy messages while the vehicle is in motion.

### **448.5 DOCUMENTATION OF ACTIVITY**

Except as otherwise directed by the Patrol Lieutenant or other department-established protocol, all calls for service assigned by a [dispatcher should be communicated by voice over the sheriff's radio and electronically via the MDC unless security or confidentiality prevents such broadcasting.

MDC and voice transmissions are used to document the member's daily activity. To ensure accuracy:

- (a) All contacts or activity shall be documented at the time of the contact.
- (b) Whenever the activity or contact is initiated by voice, it should be documented by a [dispatcher.
- (c) Whenever the activity or contact is not initiated by voice, the member shall document it via the MDC.

#### **448.5.1 STATUS CHANGES**

All changes in status (e.g., arrival at scene, meal periods, in service) will be transmitted over the sheriff's radio or through the MDC system.

Members responding to in-progress calls should advise changes in status over the radio to assist other members responding to the same incident. Other changes in status can be made on the MDC when the vehicle is not in motion.

#### **448.5.2 EMERGENCY ACTIVATION**

If there is an emergency activation and the member does not respond to a request for confirmation of the need for emergency assistance or confirms the need, available resources will be sent to assist in locating the member. If the location is known, the nearest available deputy should respond in accordance with the Deputy Response to Calls Policy.

Members should ensure a field supervisor and the Area Lieutenant are notified of the incident without delay.

Deputies not responding to the emergency shall refrain from transmitting on the sheriff's radio until a no-further-assistance broadcast is made or if they are also handling an emergency.

### **448.6 EQUIPMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

#### **448.6.1 MALFUNCTIONING MDC**

Whenever possible, members will not use vehicles with malfunctioning MDCs. Whenever members must drive a vehicle in which the MDC is not working, they shall notify Dispatch. It shall be the responsibility of the on duty dispatcher(s) to document all information that will then be transmitted verbally over the sheriff's radio. In the event that a patrol car does not have a working

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Mobile Data Computer Use*

---

MDC, they will still have to take reports and keep notes in order to complete their incident and crime reports.

### 448.6.2 BOMB CALLS

When investigating reports of possible bombs, members should not communicate on their MDCs when in the evacuation area of a suspected explosive device. Radio frequency emitted by the MDC could cause some devices to detonate.

# Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras

## 450.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

To provide procedures for use of the portable video recording system including body worn cameras (BWC), including both audio and video recording of field activity in the course of official law enforcement duties or other duties officially related to the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

## 450.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The following policy sections are intended to outline each level of responsibility as it relates to personnel and their roles with using, deploying, and maintaining digital evidence files captured by audio/video recorders or body worn cameras.

### 450.2.1 SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR

The System Administrator is designated by the Sheriff or his designee and has oversight responsibilities to include, but not limited to, the following:

- (a) Operation and user administration of the system
- (b) System evaluation
- (c) Training
- (d) Policy and procedure review and evaluation
- (e) Coordination with IT regarding system related issues
- (f) Ensure audio/video files of evidentiary value are secure and maintained for the required amount of time. Ensure all other routine files are secure and maintained for the appropriate amount of time
- (g) Ensure audio/video files are reviewed and released in accordance with federal, state, local statutes and the Merced County Sheriff's Office Policy Manual - Retention Policy

### 450.2.2 SUPERVISOR

Supervisors will ensure officers utilize the body worn cameras according to policy guidelines by conducting routine audits of each officer assigned to them during each shift rotation.

Supervisors may conduct random or directed review of recordings to ensure adherence to policy, assess performance and note videos that may be appropriate for training purposes.

Supervisors may have the ability to immediately resolve citizen complaints by viewing video captured by any portable video recorder of body worn camera. In those circumstances where a complaint is resolved with no further action needed, supervisors shall add an additional category of citizen complaint to the video and make appropriate notes in the notes section of Evidence.com.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

Supervisors completing a Use of Force review where video is captured shall ensure the video is properly identified as Use of Force in the category retention of evidence.com

Supervisors should take custody of a portable audio/video recording device as soon as practicable when the device may have captured an incident involving the use of force, an officer-involved shooting or death or other serious incident, and ensure the data is downloaded (Penal Code § 832.18).

#### **450.2.3 PERSONNEL UTILIZING PORTABLE RECORDERS OR BODY WORN CAMERAS**

Prior to going into service, uniformed personnel will be responsible for making sure that he/she is equipped with a portable recorder issued by the Department, and that the recorder is in good working order. If the recorder is not in working order or the member becomes aware of a malfunction at any time, the member shall promptly report the failure to his/her supervisor and obtain a functioning device as soon as reasonably practicable. Uniformed members should wear the recorder in a conspicuous manner or otherwise notify persons that they are being recorded, whenever reasonably practicable.

Any member assigned to a non-uniformed position may carry an approved portable recorder at any time the member believes that such a device may be useful. Unless conducting a lawful recording in an authorized undercover capacity, non-uniformed members should wear the recorder in a conspicuous manner when in use or otherwise notify persons that they are being recorded, whenever reasonably practicable.

When using a portable recorder, the assigned member shall record his/her name, MCSO identification number and the current date and time at the beginning and the end of the shift or other period of use, regardless of whether any activity was recorded. This procedure is not required when the recording device and related software captures the user's unique identification and the date and time of each recording.

Members should document the existence of a recording in any report or other official record of the contact, including any instance where the recorder malfunctioned or the member deactivated the recording. Members should include the reason for deactivation. Members should not substitute "refer to video" for a detailed and thorough report.

Once video is captured personnel shall identify audio and video files by:

- (a) When assigned, noting the Merced County Sheriff's Office case number in the Case ID Field. The correct format is 2017-00000000.
- (b) Even though the portable audio and video recording system is designed to integrate with the agencies computer aided dispatching system, it shall be the responsibility of all personnel to ensure their digital evidence is identified properly
- (c) Selecting the appropriate category(s).

Officers are encouraged to enter a title. The title should include sufficient information to identify the file, such as crime code, suspect name, location, event, etc.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

The information may be entered via handheld device, MDC, or Merced County Sheriff's Office computer work station via the Evidence.com website.

Personnel will be issued a handheld mobile device to enter the above information for each video taken. Personnel are not authorized to use any personal device and shall utilize the device issued by the Department.

Members shall turn off their MAV body worn camera when entering any Sheriff's Office building or facility when not conducting law enforcement official business. Examples of when members should turn off their MAV body worn cameras are, meal breaks, restroom breaks, locker rooms, briefings, interactions with other Sheriff's Office staff, etc.

Employees who are conducting official business while entering custodial facilities shall leave their MAV body worn cameras on.

### **450.3 MEMBER PRIVACY EXPECTATION**

All recordings made by members on any department-issued device at any time, and any recording made while acting in an official capacity for this department, regardless of ownership of the device it was made on, shall remain the property of the Department. Members shall have no expectation of privacy or ownership interest in the content of these recordings.

### **450.4 ACTIVATION OF THE PORTABLE RECORDER / BODY WORN CAMERA**

This policy is not intended to describe every possible situation in which the portable recorder should be used, although there are many situations where its use is appropriate. Members should activate the recorder any time the member believes it would be appropriate or valuable to record an incident.

The portable recorder should be activated in any of the following situations:

- (a) All enforcement and investigative contacts including stops and field interview (FI) situations
- (b) Traffic stops including, but not limited to, traffic violations, stranded motorist assistance and all crime interdiction stops
- (c) Self-initiated activity in which a member would normally notify Dispatch
- (d) Any other contact that becomes adversarial after the initial contact in a situation that would not otherwise require recording

Members should remain sensitive to the dignity of all individuals being recorded and exercise sound discretion to respect privacy by discontinuing recording whenever it reasonably appears to the member that such privacy may outweigh any legitimate law enforcement interest in recording. Requests by members of the public to stop recording should be considered using this same criterion. Recording should resume when privacy is no longer at issue unless the circumstances no longer fit the criteria for recording.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

At no time is a member expected to jeopardize his/her safety in order to activate a portable recorder or change the recording media. However, the recorder should be activated in situations described above as soon as reasonably practicable.

#### **450.4.1 SURREPTITIOUS USE OF THE PORTABLE RECORDER**

Members of the Department may surreptitiously record any conversation during the course of a criminal investigation in which the member reasonably believes that such a recording will be lawful and beneficial to the investigation (Penal Code § 633).

Members shall not surreptitiously record another department member without a court order unless lawfully authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

#### **450.4.2 CESSATION OF RECORDING**

Once activated, the portable recorder should remain on continuously until the member reasonably believes that his/her direct participation in the incident is complete or the situation no longer fits the criteria for activation. Recording may be stopped during significant periods of inactivity such as report writing or other breaks from direct participation in the incident.

Members shall cease recording whenever necessary to ensure conversations are not recorded between a person in custody and the person's attorney, religious advisor or physician, unless there is explicit consent from all parties to the conversation (Penal Code § 636).

#### **450.4.3 EXPLOSIVE DEVICE**

Many portable recorders, including body-worn cameras and audio/video transmitters, emit radio waves that could trigger an explosive device. Therefore, these devices should not be used where an explosive device may be present.

#### **450.5 PROHIBITED USE OF PORTABLE RECORDERS / BODY WORN CAMERAS**

Members are prohibited from using department-issued portable recorders and recording media for personal use and are prohibited from making personal copies of recordings created while on-duty or while acting in their official capacity.

Members are also prohibited from retaining recordings of activities or information obtained while on-duty, whether the recording was created with department-issued or personally owned recorders. Members shall not duplicate or distribute such recordings, except for authorized legitimate department business purposes. All such recordings shall be retained at the Department.

Members are prohibited from using personally owned recording devices while on-duty without the express consent of the Area Lieutenant. Any member who uses a personally owned recorder for department-related activities shall comply with the provisions of this policy, including retention and release requirements, and should notify the on-duty supervisor of such use as soon as reasonably practicable.

Recordings shall not be used by any member for the purpose of embarrassment, harassment or ridicule.

## *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

### **450.6 REVIEW OF RECORDED MEDIA FILES**

Once uploaded to the server, trained personnel may view their own audio/video data (e.g. to verify an identification, a vehicle license number or to review an incident for statement accuracy) at a Merced County Sheriff's Office computer by logging onto Evidence.com and documenting the reason for access in the "NOTES" section prior to viewing any data. Evidence.com automatically time/date stamps and records each access by officer name.

Reviewing a audio/video file requires documenting the specific reason for access on the video file page in the "NOTES" field prior to viewing unless exempted by the Sheriff or his/her designee.

Supervisors are authorized to review relevant recordings any time they are investigating alleged misconduct or reports of meritorious conduct or whenever such recordings would be beneficial in reviewing the member's performance.

Recorded files may also be reviewed:

- (a) Upon approval by a supervisor, by any member of the Department who is participating in an official investigation, such as a personnel complaint, administrative investigation or criminal investigation.
- (b) Pursuant to lawful process or by court personnel who are otherwise authorized to review evidence in a related case.
- (c) By media personnel with permission of the Sheriff or the authorized designee.
- (d) In compliance with a public records request, if permitted, and in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.
- (e) Supervisors may review MAV recordings to ensure adherence to policy, assess performance, and note videos that may be appropriate for training purposes.

All recordings should be reviewed by the Custodian of Records prior to public release (see the Records Maintenance and Release Policy). Recordings that unreasonably violate a person's privacy or sense of dignity should not be publicly released unless disclosure is required by law or order of the court.

#### **450.6.1 CRITICAL INCIDENT REVIEW**

Critical Incidents: Personnel are encouraged to consult legal representation and may review their video prior to providing a statement pursuant to an administrative or criminal inquiry.

Following a critical incident, such as an officer involved shooting, involved personnel shall not view their video on any device or computer prior to the video being uploaded in Evidence.com.

When safe and practical, an on scene supervisor shall retrieve the Axon Flex 2 body camera from the involved personnel at the scene. The supervisor will be responsible for assuring the camera is docked and uploaded into Evidence.com or turned over to arriving investigators.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

Following a critical incident, a video may only be viewed prior to being uploaded in Evidence.com:

- (a) When exigent circumstances occur, such as an officer being injured and to obtain identifying suspect information or other pertinent information from the video that may be time sensitive.
- (b) To allow investigators, such as detectives or IA personnel, to view the video in order to assist in investigation.
- (c) Video may be restricted for viewing only by personnel designated by the Sheriff.

Evidence.com shall only be accessed from Department authorized computers, such as Department workstations or MDC's. Access to Evidence.com from a home computer or nondepartmental mobile device is not authorized.

Exception: Administrative users of Evidence.com may access Evidence.com from a computer or device outside of the Department for the purpose of completing administrative tasks, such as locking or unlocking users, etc.

#### **450.6.2 CRIMINAL OR INTERNAL INVESTIGATIONS**

Investigators Conducting Criminal or Internal Investigations shall:

- (a) Advise the System Administrator to restrict access/public disclosure of the digital evidence file in criminal or internal investigations, when necessary.
- (b) Document the reason for access by entering the related file number on the digital evidence "NOTES" field prior to viewing, unless exempted by the Sheriff or designee.
- (c) Review the file to determine whether the digital evidence file is of evidentiary value and process in accordance with established procedures.
- (d) Investigators shall notify the System Administrator to remove the access restriction when the investigation is closed.

#### **450.7 RETENTION OF RECORDINGS**

Recordings of the following should be retained for a minimum of two years (Penal Code § 832.18):

- (a) Incident involving use of force by a deputy
- (b) Officer-involved shootings
- (c) Incidents that lead to the detention or arrest of an individual
- (d) Recordings relevant to a formal or informal complaint against a deputy or the Merced County Sheriff's Office

Recordings containing evidence that may be relevant to a criminal prosecution should be retained for any additional period required by law for other evidence relevant to a criminal prosecution (Penal Code § 832.18).

All other recordings should be retained for a period consistent with the requirements of the organization's records retention schedule but in no event for a period less than 180 days.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

Records or logs of access and deletion of recordings should be retained permanently (Penal Code § 832.18).

#### **450.7.1 RELEASE OF AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Any audio and video recording maintained by the Merced County Sheriff's Office is considered evidence and will be handled as such. The release of such audio and video recordings will be done according to evidence handling procedures outlined in this policy. The release of any recording from evidence should be done so after consultation with County Counsel. No audio or video recording shall be released without the express permission of the Sheriff or his designee. Nothing in this policy shall interfere with the routine discovery requests received from the District Attorney's Office for criminal prosecution.

#### **450.7.2 REQUEST FOR DELETION OF ACCIDENTAL RECORDINGS**

In the event of an accidental activation of a body worn camera or other audio/video recording device where the resulting recording is of no investigative or evidentiary value, the recording employee may request that the file be deleted by submitting an email request with sufficient information to locate the file to their appropriate supervisor who shall review the file with the area Lieutenant. The area Lieutenant will make a recommendation to the Bureau Captain who will either approve or deny the request. In the event the request is approved, the Bureau Captain will inform the system administrator to delete the file.

#### **450.7.3 COPYING PROCEDURES**

A copy of the digital evidence file can only be made by evidence personnel, detectives, or an Evidence.com administrator in accordance with the provisions of this procedure.

The personnel making a copy of any digital evidence shall make the requested copy and a second copy that shall be booked into evidence.

Other than as provided in this procedure, no member of this Department shall download, copy, or record any video from Evidence.com onto any computer, device, drive, CD, DVD or any other format without the express consent of the Sheriff or his designee.

#### **450.8 TRAINING TOOL**

Videos recorded by members may be utilized as a training tool for individuals, specific units, and the Department as a whole. A recommendation to utilize a video recording file for such purposes may come from any sources.

A person recommending utilization of a video recording file for training purposes shall submit the recommendation through the chain of command to the appropriate Division Captain.

Employees who are involved in the video recording file should be made aware of the recommendation to use the file for training before it is used. If an involved employee objects to the showing of a recording, his/her objection will be submitted to the appropriate Division Captain. The

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Portable Audio/Video Recorders - Body Worn Cameras*

---

employee who is objecting shall submit their concerns which will be measured against the training value of the video file.

# Marijuana / Cannabis

## 452.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide members of this [department/office] with guidelines for investigating the acquisition, possession, transportation, delivery, production or use of marijuana under California's medical marijuana laws.

### 452.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Cardholder** - A person issued a current identification card.

**Compassionate Use Act (CUA)** (Health and Safety Code § 11362.5) - California law intended to provide protection from prosecution to those who are seriously ill and whose health would benefit from the use of marijuana in the treatment of illness for which marijuana provides relief. The CUA does not grant immunity from arrest but rather provides an affirmative defense from prosecution for possession of medical marijuana.

**Identification card** - A valid document issued by the California Department of Public Health to both persons authorized to engage in the medical use of marijuana and also to designated primary caregivers.

**Medical marijuana** - Marijuana possessed by a patient or primary caregiver for legitimate medical purposes.

**Medical Marijuana Program (MMP)** (Health and Safety Code § 11362.7 et seq.) - California laws passed following the CUA to facilitate the prompt identification of patients and their designated primary caregivers in order to avoid unnecessary arrests and provide needed guidance to law enforcement officers. MMP prohibits arrest for possession of medical marijuana in certain circumstances and provides a defense in others.

**Patient** - A person who is entitled to the protections of the CUA because he/she has received a written or oral recommendation or approval from a physician to use marijuana for medical purposes or any person issued a valid identification card.

**Primary caregiver** - A person designated by the patient, who has consistently assumed responsibility for the patient's housing, health or safety, who may assist the patient with the medical use of marijuana under the CUA or the MMP (Health and Safety Code § 11362.5; Health and Safety Code § 11362.7).

### 452.1.2 STATUTORY AMOUNTS / LIMITATIONS

Personal cultivation of cannabis in the unincorporated area of Merced County is limited to a maximum of six (6) cannabis plants, whether immature or mature.

## *Marijuana / Cannabis*

---

Deliveries from M-Type 10, medical retailer licensees, located outside the unincorporated areas of Merced County, are permitted so long as several requirements are met. The requirements are outlined in Section 9.29.505 subsection B.

Cultivation shall be in compliance with State law and all requirements set forth in Section 9.29 of the Merced County Code. The Merced County Code provides for limitations and restrictions in both personal cultivation and commercial situations.

### **452.2 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to prioritize resources to forgo making arrests related to marijuana that the arresting deputy reasonably believes would not be prosecuted by state or federal authorities.

California's medical marijuana laws are intended to provide protection to those who are seriously ill and whose health would benefit from the use of medical marijuana.

However, California medical marijuana laws do not affect federal laws and there is no medical exception under federal law for the possession or distribution of marijuana. The Merced County Sheriff's Office will exercise discretion to ensure laws are appropriately enforced without unreasonably burdening both those individuals protected under California law and public resources.

#### **452.2.1 APPLICATIONS FOR ID CARD**

The Merced County Department of Public Health's (MCDPH) processes applications for Medical Marijuana Identification Cards (MMIC).

A written application must be submitted in person to the MCDPH. After an application is approved, an ID card will be issued by the California Department of Health Services and sent to the local health department. The ID card will then be provided to the qualified patient and approved designated primary caregivers.

This ID card is valid for one year from the date of application approval. A renewal application is required every year. Participation in the program by qualified patients is voluntary.

### **452.3 INVESTIGATION**

Investigations involving the possession, delivery, production or use of marijuana generally fall into one of several categories:

- (a) Investigations when no person makes a medicinal claim.
- (b) Investigations when a medicinal claim is made by a cardholder.
- (c) Investigations when a medicinal claim is made by a non-cardholder.

#### **452.3.1 INVESTIGATIONS WITH NO MEDICINAL CLAIM**

In any investigation involving the possession, delivery, production or use of marijuana or drug paraphernalia where no person claims that the marijuana is used for medicinal purposes, the

## *Marijuana / Cannabis*

---

deputy should proceed with a criminal investigation if the amount is greater than permitted for personal use under the Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act (Health and Safety Code § 11362.1; Health and Safety Code § 11362.2). A medicinal defense may be raised at any time, so deputies should document any statements and observations that may be relevant to whether the marijuana was possessed or produced for medicinal purposes.

### 452.3.2 INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING A MEDICINAL CLAIM MADE BY A CARDHOLDER

A cardholder or designated primary caregiver in possession of an identification card shall not be arrested for possession, transportation, delivery or cultivation of medical marijuana at or below the statutory amount unless there is probable cause to believe that (Health and Safety Code § 11362.71; Health and Safety Code § 11362.78):

- (a) The information contained in the card is false or falsified.
- (b) The card has been obtained or used by means of fraud.
- (c) The person is otherwise in violation of the provisions of the MMP.
- (d) The person possesses marijuana but not for personal medical purposes.

Deputies who reasonably believe that a person who does not have an identification card in his/her possession has been issued an identification card may treat the investigation as if the person had the card in his/her possession.

Cardholders may possess, transport, deliver or cultivate medical marijuana in amounts above the statutory amount if their doctor has concluded that the statutory amount does not meet the patient's medical needs (Health and Safety Code § 11362.71; Health and Safety Code § 11362.77). Investigations involving cardholders with more than the statutory amount of marijuana should be addressed as provided in this policy for a case involving a medicinal claim made by a non-cardholder.

### 452.3.3 INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING A MEDICINAL CLAIM MADE BY A NON-CARDHOLDER

No patient or primary caregiver should be arrested for possession or cultivation of an amount of medical marijuana if the deputy reasonably believes that marijuana is in a form and amount reasonably related to the qualified patient's current medical needs (Health and Safety Code § 11362.5). This arrest guidance also applies to sales, transportation or delivery of medical marijuana, or maintaining/renting a drug house or building that may be a nuisance if otherwise in compliance with MMP (Health and Safety Code § 11362.765).

Deputies are not obligated to accept a person's claim of having a physician's recommendation when the claim cannot be readily verified with the physician but are expected to use their judgment to assess the validity of the person's medical-use claim.

Deputies should review any available written documentation for validity and whether it contains the recommending physician's name, telephone number, address and medical license number for verification.

## *Marijuana / Cannabis*

---

Deputies should generally accept verified recommendations by a physician that statutory amounts do not meet the patient's needs (Health and Safety Code § 11362.77).

### 452.3.4 ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Deputies should consider the following when investigating an incident involving marijuana possession, delivery, production or use:

- (a) Because enforcement of medical marijuana laws can be complex, time consuming and call for resources unavailable at the time of initial investigation, deputies may consider submitting a report to the prosecutor for review, in lieu of making an arrest. This can be particularly appropriate when:
  - 1. The suspect has been identified and can be easily located at a later time.
  - 2. The case would benefit from review by a person with expertise in medical marijuana investigations.
  - 3. Sufficient evidence, such as photographs or samples, has been lawfully obtained.
  - 4. Other relevant factors, such as available [department/office] resources and time constraints prohibit making an immediate arrest.
- (b) Whenever the initial investigation reveals an amount of marijuana greater than the statutory amount, deputies should consider the following when determining whether the form and amount is reasonably related to the patient's needs:
  - 1. The amount of marijuana recommended by a medical professional to be ingested.
  - 2. The quality of the marijuana.
  - 3. The method of ingestion (e.g., smoking, eating, nebulizer).
  - 4. The timing of the possession in relation to a harvest (patient may be storing marijuana).
  - 5. Whether the marijuana is being cultivated indoors or outdoors, the climate, etc.
- (c) Before proceeding with enforcement related to collective gardens or dispensaries, deputies should consider conferring with a supervisor, an applicable state regulatory agency or other member with special knowledge in this area and/or appropriate legal counsel (Business and Professions Code § 26010; Business and Professions Code § 26060). Licensing, zoning and other related issues can be complex. Patients, primary caregivers and cardholders who collectively or cooperatively cultivate marijuana for medical purposes are provided a defense under the MMP (Health and Safety Code § 11362.775; Business and Professions Code § 26032).
- (d) Investigating members should not order a patient to destroy marijuana plants under threat of arrest.

### 452.3.5 EXCEPTIONS

This policy does not apply to, and deputies should consider taking enforcement action for the following:

## *Marijuana / Cannabis*

---

- (a) Persons who engage in illegal conduct that endangers others, such as driving under the influence of marijuana in violation of the Vehicle Code (Health and Safety Code § 11362.5).
- (b) Marijuana possession in jails or other correctional facilities that prohibit such possession (Health and Safety Code § 11362.785).
- (c) Smoking marijuana (Health and Safety Code § 11362.79):
  - 1. In any place where smoking is prohibited by law.
  - 2. In or within 1,000 feet of the grounds of a school, recreation center or youth center, unless the medical use occurs within a residence.
  - 3. On a school bus.
  - 4. While in a motor vehicle that is being operated.
  - 5. While operating a boat.
- (d) Use of marijuana by a person on probation or parole, or on bail and use is prohibited by the terms of release (Health and Safety Code § 11362.795).

### **452.3.6 INVESTIGATIONS INVOLVING A STATE LICENSEE**

No person issued a state license under the Business and Professions Code shall be arrested or cited for cultivation, possession, manufacture, processing, storing, laboratory testing, labeling, transporting, distribution or sale of medical cannabis or a medical cannabis product related to qualifying patients and primary caregivers when conducted lawfully. Whether conduct is lawful may involve questions of license classifications, local ordinances, specific requirements of the Business and Professions Code and adopted regulations. Deputies should consider conferring with a supervisor, the applicable state agency or other member with special knowledge in this area and/or appropriate legal counsel before taking enforcement action against a licensee or an employee or agent (Business and Professions Code § 26032).

### **452.4 FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Deputies should provide information regarding a marijuana investigation to federal law enforcement authorities when it is requested by federal law enforcement authorities or whenever the deputy believes those authorities would have a particular interest in the information.

### **452.5 EVIDENCE ROOM SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Evidence Room supervisor should ensure that marijuana, drug paraphernalia or other related property seized from a person engaged or assisting in the use of medical marijuana is not destroyed pending any charges and without a court order. The Evidence Room supervisor is not responsible for caring for live marijuana plants.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Marijuana / Cannabis*

---

Upon the prosecutor's decision to forgo prosecution, or the dismissal of charges or an acquittal, the Evidence Room supervisor should, as soon as practicable, return to the person from whom it was seized any useable medical marijuana, plants, drug paraphernalia or other related property.

The Evidence Room supervisor may release marijuana to federal law enforcement authorities upon presentation of a valid court order or by a written order of the Detective Unit supervisor.

## **CIVIL STANDBY**

### **453.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Generally, the department does not perform civil stand-by functions. However, there are circumstances which may require this function in order to comply with existing law or to preserve the peace. The intent of this policy is to provide guidance for the civil office, dispatch and patrol staff for civil stand-by responsibilities.

#### **453.1.1 CIRCUMSTANCES PERMITTING CIVIL STANDBY**

1. The requesting party, (Defendant/Plaintiff) will have a current civil standby court order issued by a State of California Superior Court. If the requesting party has an out-of-state order, it shall be requesting party's responsibility to obtain a State of California order.
2. Civil stand-bys will take place at county addresses only. If the stand-by is to occur within a jurisdiction which employs its own law enforcement agency, the requesting party shall be referred to the responsible agency.
3. If it pertains to child custody, it shall be a child transfer only. No civil stand-bys for child visitation will be authorized.
4. The requesting party has made the appropriate appointment through the civil office and any/all applicable fees have been paid. Requesting parties will be notified that failure to comply with the specified appointment will not guarantee deputy's response.

## Bicycle Patrol Unit

### 454.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Merced County Sheriff's Office has established the Bicycle Patrol Unit (BPU) for the purpose of enhancing patrol efforts in the community. Bicycle patrol has been shown to be an effective way to increase law enforcement visibility in congested areas and their quiet operation can provide a tactical approach to crimes in progress. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the safe and effective operation of the patrol bicycle.

### 454.2 POLICY

Patrol bicycles may be used for regular patrol duty, traffic enforcement, parking control, or special events. The use of the patrol bicycle will emphasize their mobility and visibility to the community.

Bicycles may be deployed to any area at all hours of the day or night, according to Department needs and as staffing levels allow.

Requests for specific deployment of bicycle patrol deputies shall be coordinated through the Bicycle Patrol Unit supervisor or the shift supervisor.

### 454.3 SELECTION OF PERSONNEL

Interested sworn personnel, who are off probation, shall submit a change of assignment request to their appropriate Operations Captain. A copy will be forwarded to the BPU supervisor. Qualified applicants will then be invited to an oral interview. The oral board will consist of the BPU supervisor and second person to be selected by the BPU supervisor. Interested personnel shall be evaluated by the following criteria:

- (a) Recognized competence and ability as evidenced by performance.
- (b) Special skills or training as it pertains to the assignment.
- (c) Good physical condition.
- (d) Willingness to perform duties using the bicycle as a mode of transportation.

#### 454.3.1 BICYCLE PATROL UNIT SUPERVISOR

The Bicycle Patrol Unit supervisor will be selected from the rank of sergeant by the Operations Division Captain or his/her designee.

The Bicycle Patrol Unit supervisor shall have responsibility for the following:

- (a) Organizing bicycle patrol training.
- (b) Inspecting and maintaining inventory of patrol bicycles and program equipment.
- (c) Scheduling maintenance and repairs.
- (d) Evaluating performance of bicycle deputies.
- (e) Coordinating activities with the Patrol Division.

## *Bicycle Patrol Unit*

---

- (f) Other activities as required to maintain the efficient operation of the Bicycle Patrol Unit.

### **454.4 TRAINING**

Participants in the program must complete an initial Department approved bicycle-training course after acceptance into the program. Thereafter bicycle patrol deputies should receive twice yearly in-service training to improve skills and refresh safety, health and operational procedures. The initial training shall minimally include the following:

- Bicycle patrol strategies.
- Bicycle safety and accident prevention.
- Operational tactics using bicycles.

Bicycle patrol deputies will be required to qualify with their duty firearm while wearing bicycle safety equipment including the helmet and riding gloves.

### **454.5 UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Deputies shall wear the department-approved uniform and safety equipment while operating the department bicycle. Safety equipment includes department-approved helmet, riding gloves, protective eyewear and approved footwear.

The bicycle patrol unit uniform consists of the standard short-sleeve uniform shirt or other department-approved shirt with department badge and patches, and department-approved bicycle patrol pants or shorts.

Bicycle patrol deputies shall carry the same equipment on the bicycle patrol duty belt as they would on a regular patrol assignment.

### **454.6 CARE AND USE OF PATROL BICYCLES**

Deputies will be assigned a specially marked and equipped patrol bicycle, attached gear bag, two batteries and a charger.

Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be primarily black or white in with a "SHERIFF" decal affixed to each side of the crossbar or the bike's saddlebag. Every such bicycle shall be equipped with front and rear reflectors front lights and a siren/horn satisfying the requirements of Vehicle Code §2800.1(b).

Bicycles utilized for uniformed bicycle patrol shall be equipped with a rear rack and/or saddle bag(s) sufficient to carry all necessary equipment to handle routine patrol calls including report writing, vehicle storage and citations.

Each bicycle gear bag shall include a first aid kit, tire pump, repair tool, tire tube, security lock, equipment information and use manuals. These items are to remain with/on the bicycle at all times.

Each bicycle shall be equipped with a steady or flashing blue warning light that is visible from the front, sides, or rear of the bicycle. (Vehicle Code § 21201.3)

## *Bicycle Patrol Unit*

---

Bicycle deputies shall conduct an inspection of the bicycle and equipment prior to use to insure proper working order of the equipment. Deputies are responsible for the routine care and maintenance of their assigned equipment (e.g., tire pressure, chain lubrication, overall cleaning).

If a needed repair is beyond the ability of the bicycle deputy, a repair work order will be completed and forwarded to the program supervisor for repair by an approved technician.

Each bicycle will have scheduled maintenance twice yearly to be performed by a department approved repair shop/technician.

At the end of a bicycle assignment, the bicycle shall be returned clean and ready for the next tour of duty.

Electric patrol bicycle batteries shall be rotated on the assigned charger at the end of each tour of duty. During prolonged periods of non-use, each deputy assigned an electric bicycle shall periodically rotate the batteries on the respective charges to increase battery life.

Deputies shall not modify the patrol bicycle, remove, modify or add components except with the expressed approval of the bicycle supervisor, or in the event of an emergency.

Vehicle bicycle racks are available should the deputy need to transport the patrol bicycle. Due to possible component damage, transportation of the patrol bicycle in a trunk or on a patrol car push-bumper is discouraged.

Bicycles shall be properly secured when not in the deputy's immediate presence.

### **454.7 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY**

Deputies must operate the bicycle in compliance with the vehicle code under normal operation. Deputies may operate the bicycle without lighting equipment during hours of darkness when such operation reasonably appears necessary for officer safety and tactical considerations. Deputies must use caution and care when operating the bicycle without lighting equipment.

Deputies are exempt from the rules of the road under the following conditions (Vehicle Code § 21200(b)(1)):

- (a) In response to an emergency call.
- (b) While engaged in rescue operations.
- (c) In the immediate pursuit of an actual or suspected violator of the law.

## Foot Pursuits

### 458.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to assist deputies in making the decision to initiate or continue the pursuit of suspects on foot.

### 458.2 DECISION TO PURSUE

The safety of department members and the public should be the primary consideration when determining whether a foot pursuit should be initiated or continued. Deputies must be mindful that immediate apprehension of a suspect is rarely more important than the safety of the public and department members.

Deputies may be justified in initiating a foot pursuit of any individual the deputy reasonably believes is about to engage in, is engaging in or has engaged in criminal activity. The decision to initiate or continue such a foot pursuit, however, must be continuously re-evaluated in light of the circumstances presented at the time.

Mere flight by a person who is not suspected of criminal activity shall not serve as justification for engaging in an extended foot pursuit without the development of reasonable suspicion regarding the individual's involvement in criminal activity or being wanted by law enforcement.

Deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit is a decision that a deputy must make quickly and under unpredictable and dynamic circumstances. It is recognized that foot pursuits may place department members and the public at significant risk. Therefore, no deputy or supervisor shall be criticized or disciplined for deciding not to engage in a foot pursuit because of the perceived risk involved.

If circumstances permit, surveillance and containment are generally the safest tactics for apprehending fleeing persons. In deciding whether to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, a deputy should continuously consider reasonable alternatives to a foot pursuit based upon the circumstances and resources available, such as:

- (a) Containment of the area.
- (b) Saturation of the area with law enforcement personnel, including assistance from other agencies.
- (c) A canine search.
- (d) Thermal imaging or other sensing technology.
- (e) Air support.
- (f) Apprehension at another time when the identity of the suspect is known or there is information available that would likely allow for later apprehension, and the need to immediately apprehend the suspect does not reasonably appear to outweigh the risk of continuing the foot pursuit.

## *Foot Pursuits*

---

### **458.3 GENERAL GUIDELINES**

When reasonably practicable, deputies should consider alternatives to engaging in or continuing a foot pursuit when:

- (a) Directed by a supervisor to terminate the foot pursuit; such an order shall be considered mandatory
- (b) The deputy is acting alone.
- (c) Two or more deputies become separated, lose visual contact with one another, or obstacles separate them to the degree that they cannot immediately assist each other should a confrontation take place. In such circumstances, it is generally recommended that a single deputy keep the suspect in sight from a safe distance and coordinate the containment effort.
- (d) The deputy is unsure of his/her location and direction of travel.
- (e) The deputy is pursuing multiple suspects and it is not reasonable to believe that the deputy would be able to control the suspect should a confrontation occur.
- (f) The physical condition of the deputy renders him/her incapable of controlling the suspect if apprehended.
- (g) The deputy loses radio contact with the [dispatcher or with assisting or backup deputies.
- (h) The suspect enters a building, structure, confined space, isolated area or dense or difficult terrain, and there are insufficient deputies to provide backup and containment. The primary deputy should consider discontinuing the foot pursuit and coordinating containment pending the arrival of sufficient resources.
- (i) The deputy becomes aware of unanticipated or unforeseen circumstances that unreasonably increase the risk to deputies or the public.
- (j) The deputy reasonably believes that the danger to the pursuing deputies or public outweighs the objective of immediate apprehension.
- (k) The deputy loses possession of his/her firearm or other essential equipment.
- (l) The deputy or a third party is injured during the pursuit, requiring immediate assistance, and there are no other emergency personnel available to render assistance.
- (m) The suspect's location is no longer definitely known.
- (n) The identity of the suspect is established or other information exists that will allow for the suspect's apprehension at a later time, and it reasonably appears that there is no immediate threat to department members or the public if the suspect is not immediately apprehended.

## *Foot Pursuits*

---

- (o) The deputy's ability to safely continue the pursuit is impaired by inclement weather, darkness or other environmental conditions.

### **458.4 RESPONSIBILITIES IN FOOT PURSUITS**

#### **458.4.1 INITIATING DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Unless relieved by another deputy or a supervisor, the initiating deputy shall be responsible for coordinating the progress of the pursuit. When acting alone and when practicable, the initiating deputy should not attempt to overtake and confront the suspect but should attempt to keep the suspect in sight until sufficient deputies are present to safely apprehend the suspect.

Early communication of available information from the involved deputies is essential so that adequate resources can be coordinated and deployed to bring a foot pursuit to a safe conclusion. Deputies initiating a foot pursuit should, at a minimum, broadcast the following information as soon as it becomes practicable and available:

- (a) Location and direction of travel
- (b) Call sign identifier
- (c) Reason for the foot pursuit, such as the crime classification
- (d) Number of suspects and description, to include name if known
- (e) Whether the suspect is known or believed to be armed with a dangerous weapon

Deputies should be mindful that radio transmissions made while running may be difficult to understand and may need to be repeated.

Absent extenuating circumstances, any deputy unable to promptly and effectively broadcast this information should terminate the foot pursuit. If the foot pursuit is discontinued for any reason, immediate efforts for containment should be established and alternatives considered based upon the circumstances and available resources.

When a foot pursuit terminates, the deputy will notify the [dispatcher of his/her location and the status of the pursuit termination (e.g., suspect in custody, lost sight of suspect), and will direct further actions as reasonably appear necessary, to include requesting medical aid as needed for deputies, suspects or members of the public.

#### **458.4.2 ASSISTING DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES**

Whenever any deputy announces that he/she is engaged in a foot pursuit, all other deputies should minimize non-essential radio traffic to permit the involved deputies maximum access to the radio frequency.

#### **458.4.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon becoming aware of a foot pursuit, the supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to ascertain sufficient information to direct responding resources and to take command, control and coordination of the foot pursuit. The supervisor should respond to the area whenever possible;

## *Foot Pursuits*

---

the supervisor does not, however, need not be physically present to exercise control over the foot pursuit. The supervisor shall continuously assess the situation in order to ensure the foot pursuit is conducted within established department guidelines.

The supervisor shall terminate the foot pursuit when the danger to pursuing deputies or the public appears to unreasonably outweigh the objective of immediate apprehension of the suspect.

Upon apprehension of the suspect, the supervisor shall promptly proceed to the termination point to direct the post-foot pursuit activity.

### **458.4.4 DISPATCH RESPONSIBILITIES**

Upon notification or becoming aware that a foot pursuit is in progress, the [dispatcher is responsible for:

- (a) Clearing the radio channel of non-emergency traffic.
- (b) Coordinating pursuit communications of the involved deputies.
- (c) Broadcasting pursuit updates as well as other pertinent information as necessary.
- (d) Ensuring that a field supervisor is notified of the foot pursuit.
- (e) Notifying and coordinating with other involved or affected agencies as practicable.
- (f) Notifying the Patrol Lieutenant as soon as practicable.
- (g) Assigning an incident number and logging all pursuit activities.

### **458.5 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS**

The initiating deputy shall complete appropriate crime/arrest reports documenting, at minimum:

- (a) Date and time of the foot pursuit.
- (b) Initial reason and circumstances surrounding the foot pursuit.
- (c) Course and approximate distance of the foot pursuit.
- (d) Alleged offenses.
- (e) Involved vehicles and deputies.
- (f) Whether a suspect was apprehended as well as the means and methods used.
  - 1. Any use of force shall be reported and documented in compliance with the Use of Force Policy.
- (g) Arrestee information, if applicable.
- (h) Any injuries and/or medical treatment.
- (i) Any property or equipment damage.
- (j) Name of the supervisor at the scene or who handled the incident.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Foot Pursuits*

---

Assisting deputies taking an active role in the apprehension of the suspect shall complete supplemental reports as necessary or as directed.

The supervisor reviewing the report will make a preliminary determination that the pursuit appears to be in compliance with this policy or that additional review and/or follow-up is warranted.

In any case in which a suspect is not apprehended and there is insufficient information to support further investigation, a supervisor may authorize that the initiating deputy need not complete a formal report.

### **458.6 POLICY**

It is the policy of this department that deputies, when deciding to initiate or continue a foot pursuit, continuously balance the objective of apprehending the suspect with the risk and potential for injury to department members, the public or the suspect.

Deputies are expected to act reasonably, based on the totality of the circumstances.

---

## School Resource Deputies

### 459.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

School Resource deputies are sheriff's deputies who are assigned to work at education or school within the County of Merced. They are to assist the school district with the enforcement of laws, handle criminal investigations and promote a positive role to the district and students they serve.

#### 459.1.1 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The School Resource Deputy role is to document calls for service and their actions at the school. They are to work in concert with school administrations to maintain a safe and positive learning environment.

As mandated reporters, all criminal violations of law will be documented with a crime report and forwarded to the appropriate agency or division. Despite the wishes of a school district to not want a report on file, all violations of law will be documented by the School Resource Deputy who is assigned to that district.

All reports will be completed by the end of the School Resource Deputy's shift. School Resource Deputies will only hold reports with prior approval of their immediate supervisor.

School Resource Deputies shall be in uniform unless given prior approval to wear other clothing by their immediate supervisor.

Any overtime that needs to be worked by a School Resource Deputy will be approved by their supervisor, prior to the event.

School Resource Deputies will advise Dispatch, when practical, which school they are working at.

## Search/Arrest Warrant Threat Matrix

### 461.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The arrest/search warrant matrix is designed to be used prior to the service of any search warrant by any sworn member of this department.

The arrest/search warrant matrix is a threat assessment guideline which considers issues relating to officer safety and/or safety to the community and the subject(s) at the location where the warrant is to be served. It is intended to provoke consideration of issues relating to officer safety and/or safety to the community. It is recognized that each situation is unique, and the matrix may not apply to every circumstance. Operational decision-making is ultimately the responsibility of the on-scene supervisor or the Incident Commander.

The investigating deputy shall complete this form prior to service of the search warrant. The form shall be presented to his or her immediate supervisor for review. Both the investigating deputy and the responsible supervisor shall sign the arrest/search warrant matrix.

If the investigating deputy/officer is from another law enforcement agency (multi-agency team) the deputy/officer shall present it to another supervisor from his/her department or the Operations Division Captain.

After the service of the warrant, the form shall be forwarded to the SWAT Commander.

It is recognized that there are circumstances under which the preparation of this matrix form will not be applicable such as service of warrants on third parties (i.e., corporations) for records and documents (i.e., telephone, e-mail, PEN register, etc.) in written or electronic format. However, every situation is unique. Investigators should consult their immediate supervisor for guidance on individual situations as they arise.

Completed forms shall be sent to the SWAT Captain.

The arrest/search warrant matrix form can be located on the department computer "X" drive in the file folder "Search Warrant Matrix".

## Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)

### 462.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the capture, storage and use of digital data obtained through the use of Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology.

### 462.2 ADMINISTRATION

The ALPR technology, also known as License Plate Recognition (LPR), allows for the automated detection of license plates. It is used by the Merced County Sheriff's Office to convert data associated with vehicle license plates for official law enforcement purposes, including identifying stolen or wanted vehicles, stolen license plates and missing persons. It may also be used to gather information related to active warrants, homeland security, electronic surveillance, suspect interdiction and stolen property recovery.

All installation and maintenance of ALPR equipment, as well as ALPR data retention and access, shall be managed by the Area Lieutenant. The Area Lieutenant will assign members under his/her command to administer the day-to-day operation of the ALPR equipment and data.

#### 462.2.1 ALPR ADMINISTRATOR

The Area Lieutenant shall be responsible for developing guidelines and procedures to comply with the requirements of Civil Code § 1798.90.5 et seq. This includes, but is not limited to (Civil Code § 1798.90.51; Civil Code § 1798.90.53):

- (a) A description of the job title or other designation of the members and independent contractors who are authorized to use or access the ALPR system or to collect ALPR information.
- (b) Training requirements for authorized users.
- (c) A description of how the ALPR system will be monitored to ensure the security of the information and compliance with applicable privacy laws.
- (d) Procedures for system operators to maintain records of access in compliance with Civil Code § 1798.90.52.
- (e) The title and name of the current designee in overseeing the ALPR operation.
- (f) Working with the Custodian of Records on the retention and destruction of ALPR data.
- (g) Ensuring this policy and related procedures are conspicuously posted on the department's website.

### 462.3 OPERATIONS

Use of an ALPR is restricted to the purposes outlined below. Department members shall not use, or allow others to use the equipment or database records for any unauthorized purpose (Civil Code § 1798.90.51; Civil Code § 1798.90.53).

- (a) An ALPR shall only be used for official law enforcement business.

## *Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)*

---

- (b) An ALPR may be used in conjunction with any routine patrol operation or criminal investigation. Reasonable suspicion or probable cause is not required before using an ALPR.
- (c) While an ALPR may be used to canvass license plates around any crime scene, particular consideration should be given to using ALPR-equipped cars to canvass areas around homicides, shootings and other major incidents. Partial license plates reported during major crimes should be entered into the ALPR system in an attempt to identify suspect vehicles.
- (d) No member of this department shall operate ALPR equipment or access ALPR data without first completing department-approved training.
- (e) No ALPR operator may access department, state or federal data unless otherwise authorized to do so.
- (f) If practicable, the deputy should verify an ALPR response through the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) before taking enforcement action that is based solely on an ALPR alert.

### **462.4 DATA COLLECTION AND RETENTION**

The Area Lieutenant is responsible for ensuring systems and processes are in place for the proper collection and retention of ALPR data. Data will be transferred from vehicles to the designated storage in accordance with department procedures.

All ALPR data downloaded to the server should be stored for a minimum of one year (Government Code § 34090.6) and in accordance with the established records retention schedule. Thereafter, ALPR data should be purged unless it has become, or it is reasonable to believe it will become, evidence in a criminal or civil action or is subject to a discovery request or other lawful action to produce records. In those circumstances the applicable data should be downloaded from the server onto portable media and booked into evidence.

### **462.5 ACCOUNTABILITY**

All data will be closely safeguarded and protected by both procedural and technological means. The Merced County Sheriff's Office will observe the following safeguards regarding access to and use of stored data (Civil Code § 1798.90.51; Civil Code § 1798.90.53):

- (a) All ALPR data downloaded to the mobile workstation and in storage shall be accessible only through a login/password-protected system capable of documenting all access of information by name, date and time (Civil Code § 1798.90.52).
- (b) Members approved to access ALPR data under these guidelines are permitted to access the data for legitimate law enforcement purposes only, such as when the data relate to a specific criminal investigation or department-related civil or administrative action.

## *Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs)*

---

- (c) ALPR system audits should be conducted on a regular basis.

For security or data breaches, see the Records Release and Maintenance Policy.

### **462.6 POLICY**

The policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office is to utilize ALPR technology to capture and store digital license plate data and images while recognizing the established privacy rights of the public.

All data and images gathered by the ALPR are for the official use of this department. Because such data may contain confidential information, it is not open to public review.

### **462.7 RELEASING ALPR DATA**

The ALPR data may be shared only with other law enforcement or prosecutorial agencies for official law enforcement purposes or as otherwise permitted by law, using the following procedures:

- (a) The agency makes a written request for the ALPR data that includes:
  - 1. The name of the agency.
  - 2. The name of the person requesting.
  - 3. The intended purpose of obtaining the information.
- (b) The request is reviewed by the Area Lieutenant or the authorized designee and approved before the request is fulfilled.
- (c) The approved request is retained on file.

Requests for ALPR data by non-law enforcement or non-prosecutorial agencies will be processed as provided in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy (Civil Code § 1798.90.55).

### **462.8 TRAINING**

The Area Lieutenant should ensure that members receive department-approved training for those authorized to use or access the ALPR system (Civil Code § 1798.90.51; Civil Code § 1798.90.53).

## Planned Enforcement Details

### **463.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Members of the department will complete operation plans that involve planned enforcement details.

When appropriate, a search warrant or other large scale coordinated enforcement activity will have a list of involved personnel (department or allied agency) and outline expectations and guidelines for the operation.

This plan will be submitted to the immediate supervisor for review and approval prior to the event.

Once approved, the operations plan will be briefed to all involved by the deputy in charge of the event.

Completed operations plans will become part of the investigators case file and be maintained as part of the investigation.

The operations plan is located on the department "X" in the folder Search Warrant Matrix.

# Homeless Persons

## 464.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that personnel understand the needs and rights of the homeless and to establish procedures to guide deputies during all contacts with the homeless, whether consensual or for enforcement purposes. The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes that members of the homeless community are often in need of special protection and services. The Merced County Sheriff's Office will address these needs in balance with the overall mission of this department. Therefore, deputies will consider the following when serving the homeless community.

### 464.1.1 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to provide law enforcement services to all members of the community, while protecting the rights, dignity and private property of the homeless. Homelessness is not a crime and members of this department will not use homelessness solely as a basis for detention or law enforcement action.

## 464.2 HOMELESS COMMUNITY LIAISON

When staffing permits, the Sheriff will designate a member of this department to act as the Homeless Liaison Deputy. The responsibilities of the Homeless Liaison Deputy include the following:

- (a) Maintain and make available to all department employees a list of assistance programs and other resources that are available to the homeless.
- (b) Meet with social services and representatives of other organizations that render assistance to the homeless.
- (c) Maintain a list of the areas within and near this jurisdiction that are used as frequent homeless encampments.
- (d) Remain abreast of laws dealing with the removal and/or destruction of the personal property of the homeless. This will include:
  - 1. Proper posting of notices of trespass and clean-up operations.
  - 2. Proper retention of property after clean-up, to include procedures for owners to reclaim their property in accordance with the Property and Evidence Policy and other established procedures.
- (e) Be present during any clean-up operation conducted by this department involving the removal of personal property of the homeless to ensure that the rights of the homeless are not violated.
- (f) Develop training to assist deputies in understanding current legal and social issues relating to the homeless.

## *Homeless Persons*

---

### **464.3 FIELD CONTACTS**

Deputies are encouraged to contact the homeless for purposes of rendering aid, support and for community-oriented policing purposes. Nothing in this policy is meant to dissuade a deputy from taking reasonable enforcement action when facts support a reasonable suspicion of criminal activity. However, when encountering a homeless person who has committed a non-violent misdemeanor and continued freedom is not likely to result in a continuation of the offense or a breach of the peace, deputies are encouraged to consider long-term solutions to problems that may relate to the homeless, such as shelter referrals and counseling in lieu of physical arrest.

Deputies should provide homeless persons with resource and assistance information whenever it is reasonably apparent that such services may be appropriate.

#### **464.3.1 OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

Homeless members of the community will receive the same level and quality of service provided to other members of the community. The fact that a victim or witness is homeless can, however, require special considerations for a successful investigation and prosecution. Deputies should consider the following when handling investigations involving homeless victims, witnesses or suspects:

- (a) Document alternate contact information. This may include obtaining addresses and phone numbers of relatives and friends.
- (b) Document places the homeless person may frequent.
- (c) Provide homeless victims with victim/witness resources when appropriate.
- (d) Obtain statements from all available witnesses in the event that a homeless victim is unavailable for a court appearance.
- (e) Consider whether the person may be a dependent adult or elder, and if so, proceed in accordance with the Adult Abuse Policy.
- (f) Arrange for transportation for investigation-related matters, such as medical exams and court appearances.
- (g) Consider whether a crime should be reported and submitted for prosecution, even when a homeless victim indicates that he/she does not desire prosecution.

### **464.4 PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The personal property of homeless persons must not be treated differently than the property of other members of the public. Deputies should use reasonable care when handling, collecting and retaining the personal property of homeless persons and should not destroy or discard the personal property of a homeless person.

When a homeless person is arrested or otherwise removed from a public place, deputies should make reasonable accommodations to permit the person to lawfully secure his/her personal property. Otherwise, the personal property should be collected for safekeeping. If the arrestee has more personal property than can reasonably be collected and transported by the deputy, a

## *Homeless Persons*

---

supervisor should be consulted. The property should be photographed and measures should be taken to remove or secure the property. It will be the supervisor's responsibility to coordinate the removal and safekeeping of the property.

Deputies should not conduct or assist in clean-up operations of belongings that reasonably appear to be the property of homeless persons without the prior authorization of a supervisor or Area Lieutenant. When practicable, requests by the public for clean-up of a homeless encampment should be referred to the Area Lieutenant.

Deputies who encounter unattended encampments, bedding or other personal property in public areas that reasonably appears to belong to a homeless person should not remove or destroy such property and should inform their supervisor if such property appears to involve a trespass, blight to the community or is the subject of a complaint. It will be the responsibility of the deputy to address the matter in a timely fashion.

### **464.5 MENTAL ILLNESS AND MENTAL IMPAIRMENT**

Some homeless persons may suffer from a mental illness or a mental impairment. Deputies shall not detain a homeless person under a mental illness commitment unless facts and circumstances warrant such a detention (see the Crisis Intervention Incidents Policy).

When a mental illness hold is not warranted, the contacting deputy should provide the homeless person with contact information for mental health assistance as appropriate. In these circumstances, deputies may provide transportation to a mental health specialist if requested by the person and approved by a supervisor.

### **464.6 ECOLOGICAL ISSUES**

Sometimes homeless encampments can impact the ecology and natural resources of the community and may involve criminal offenses beyond mere littering. Deputies are encouraged to notify other appropriate agencies or departments when a significant impact to the environment has or is likely to occur. Significant impacts to the environment may warrant a crime report, investigation, supporting photographs and supervisor notification.

# Crisis Intervention Incidents

## 465.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for interacting with those who may be experiencing a mental health or emotional crisis. Interaction with such individuals has the potential for miscommunication and violence. It often requires a deputy to make difficult judgments about a person's mental state and intent in order to effectively and legally interact with the individual.

### 465.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Person in crisis** - A person whose level of distress or mental health symptoms have exceeded the person's internal ability to manage his/her behavior or emotions. A crisis can be precipitated by any number of things, including an increase in the symptoms of mental illness despite treatment compliance; non-compliance with treatment, including a failure to take prescribed medications appropriately; or any other circumstance or event that causes the person to engage in erratic, disruptive or dangerous behavior that may be accompanied by impaired judgment.

## 465.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing a consistently high level of service to all members of the community and recognizes that persons in crisis may benefit from intervention. The Department will collaborate, where feasible, with mental health professionals to develop an overall intervention strategy to guide its members' interactions with those experiencing a mental health crisis. This is to ensure equitable and safe treatment of all involved.

## 465.3 SIGNS

Members should be alert to any of the following possible signs of mental health issues or crises:

- (a) A known history of mental illness
- (b) Threats of or attempted suicide
- (c) Loss of memory
- (d) Incoherence, disorientation or slow response
- (e) Delusions, hallucinations, perceptions unrelated to reality or grandiose ideas
- (f) Depression, pronounced feelings of hopelessness or uselessness, extreme sadness or guilt
- (g) Social withdrawal
- (h) Manic or impulsive behavior, extreme agitation, lack of control
- (i) Lack of fear
- (j) Anxiety, aggression, rigidity, inflexibility or paranoia

## *Crisis Intervention Incidents*

---

Members should be aware that this list is not exhaustive. The presence or absence of any of these should not be treated as proof of the presence or absence of a mental health issue or crisis.

### **465.4 COORDINATION WITH MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS**

The Sheriff shall designate the Area Lieutenant to collaborate with mental health professionals to develop an education and response protocol. It should include a list of community resources, to guide department interaction with those who may be suffering from mental illness or who appear to be in a mental health crisis.

### **465.5 FIRST RESPONDERS**

Safety is a priority for first responders. It is important to recognize that individuals under the influence of alcohol, drugs or both may exhibit symptoms that are similar to those of a person in a mental health crisis. These individuals may still present a serious threat to deputies; such a threat should be addressed with reasonable tactics. Nothing in this policy shall be construed to limit a deputy's authority to use reasonable force when interacting with a person in crisis.

Deputies are reminded that mental health issues, mental health crises and unusual behavior alone are not criminal offenses. Individuals may benefit from treatment as opposed to incarceration.

A deputy responding to a call involving a person in crisis should:

- (a) Promptly assess the situation independent of reported information and make a preliminary determination regarding whether a mental health crisis may be a factor.
- (b) Request available backup deputies and specialized resources as deemed necessary and, if it is reasonably believed that the person is in a crisis situation, use conflict resolution and de-escalation techniques to stabilize the incident as appropriate.
- (c) If feasible, and without compromising safety, turn off flashing lights, bright lights or sirens.
- (d) Attempt to determine if weapons are present or available.
  - 1. Prior to making contact, and whenever possible and reasonable, conduct a search of the Department of Justice Automated Firearms System via the California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS) to determine whether the person is the registered owner of a firearm (Penal Code § 11106.4).
- (e) Take into account the person's mental and emotional state and potential inability to understand commands or to appreciate the consequences of his/her action or inaction, as perceived by the deputy.
- (f) Secure the scene and clear the immediate area as necessary.
- (g) Employ tactics to preserve the safety of all participants.
- (h) Determine the nature of any crime.
- (i) Request a supervisor, as warranted.
- (j) Evaluate any available information that might assist in determining cause or motivation for the person's actions or stated intentions.

## *Crisis Intervention Incidents*

---

- (k) If circumstances reasonably permit, consider and employ alternatives to force.

### **465.6 DE-ESCALATION**

Deputies should consider that taking no action or passively monitoring the situation may be the most reasonable response to a mental health crisis.

Once it is determined that a situation is a mental health crisis and immediate safety concerns have been addressed, responding members should be aware of the following considerations and should generally:

- Evaluate safety conditions.
- Introduce themselves and attempt to obtain the person's name.
- Be patient, polite, calm, courteous and avoid overreacting.
- Speak and move slowly and in a non-threatening manner.
- Moderate the level of direct eye contact.
- Remove distractions or disruptive people from the area.
- Demonstrate active listening skills (e.g., summarize the person's verbal communication).
- Provide for sufficient avenues of retreat or escape should the situation become volatile.

Responding deputies generally should not:

- Use stances or tactics that can be interpreted as aggressive.
- Allow others to interrupt or engage the person.
- Corner a person who is not believed to be armed, violent or suicidal.
- Argue, speak with a raised voice or use threats to obtain compliance.

### **465.7 INCIDENT ORIENTATION**

When responding to an incident that may involve mental illness or a mental health crisis, the deputy should request that the [dispatcher provide critical information as it becomes available. This includes:

- (a) Whether the person relies on drugs or medication, or may have failed to take his/her medication.
- (b) Whether there have been prior incidents, suicide threats/attempts, and whether there has been previous sheriff's response.
- (c) Contact information for a treating physician or mental health professional.

Additional resources and a supervisor should be requested as warranted.

## *Crisis Intervention Incidents*

---

### **465.8 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

A supervisor should respond to the scene of any interaction with a person in crisis. Responding supervisors should:

- (a) Attempt to secure appropriate and sufficient resources.
- (b) Closely monitor any use of force, including the use of restraints, and ensure that those subjected to the use of force are provided with timely access to medical care (see the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy).
- (c) Consider strategic disengagement. Absent an imminent threat to the public and, as circumstances dictate, this may include removing or reducing law enforcement resources or engaging in passive monitoring.
- (d) Ensure that all reports are completed and that incident documentation uses appropriate terminology and language.
- (e) Conduct an after-action tactical and operational debriefing, and prepare an after-action evaluation of the incident to be forwarded to the Captain.

Evaluate whether a critical incident stress management debriefing for involved members is warranted.

### **465.9 INCIDENT REPORTING**

Members engaging in any oral or written communication associated with a mental health crisis should be mindful of the sensitive nature of such communications and should exercise appropriate discretion when referring to or describing persons and circumstances.

Members having contact with a person in crisis should keep related information confidential, except to the extent that revealing information is necessary to conform to department reporting procedures or other official mental health or medical proceedings.

#### **465.9.1 DIVERSION**

Individuals who are not being arrested should be processed in accordance with the Mental Illness Commitments Policy.

### **465.10 CIVILIAN INTERACTION WITH PEOPLE IN CRISIS**

Civilian members may be required to interact with persons in crisis in an administrative capacity, such as dispatching, records request, and animal control issues.

- (a) Members should treat all individuals equally and with dignity and respect.
- (b) If a member believes that he/she is interacting with a person in crisis, he/she should proceed patiently and in a calm manner.
- (c) Members should be aware and understand that the person may make unusual or bizarre claims or requests.

If a person's behavior makes the member feel unsafe, if the person is or becomes disruptive or violent, or if the person acts in such a manner as to cause the member to believe that the

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Crisis Intervention Incidents*

---

person may be harmful to him/herself or others, a deputy should be promptly summoned to provide assistance.

#### **465.11 EVALUATION**

The Area Lieutenant should coordinate the crisis intervention strategy for this department should ensure that a thorough review and analysis of the department response to these incidents is conducted annually. The report will not include identifying information pertaining to any involved individuals, deputies or incidents and will be submitted to the Sheriff through the chain of command.

#### **465.12 TRAINING**

In coordination with the mental health community and appropriate stakeholders, the Department will develop and provide comprehensive education and training to all department members to enable them to effectively interact with persons in crisis.

This department will endeavor to provide Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST)-approved advanced officer training on interaction with persons with mental disabilities, welfare checks and crisis intervention (Penal Code § 11106.4; Penal Code § 13515.25; Penal Code § 13515.27; Penal Code § 13515.30).

## Public Recording of Law Enforcement Activity

### 466.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for handling situations in which members of the public photograph or audio/video record law enforcement actions and other public activities that involve members of this department. In addition, this policy provides guidelines for situations where the recordings may be evidence.

### 466.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes the right of persons to lawfully record members of this department who are performing their official duties. Members of this department will not prohibit or intentionally interfere with such lawful recordings. Any recordings that are deemed to be evidence of a crime or relevant to an investigation will only be collected or seized lawfully.

Deputies should exercise restraint and should not resort to highly discretionary arrests for offenses such as interference, failure to comply or disorderly conduct as a means of preventing someone from exercising the right to record members performing their official duties.

### 466.3 RECORDING LAW ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY

Members of the public who wish to record law enforcement activities are limited only in certain aspects.

- (a) Recordings may be made from any public place or any private property where the individual has the legal right to be present (Penal Code § 69; Penal Code § 148).
- (b) Beyond the act of photographing or recording, individuals may not interfere with the law enforcement activity. Examples of interference include, but are not limited to:
  - 1. Tampering with a witness or suspect.
  - 2. Inciting others to violate the law.
  - 3. Being so close to the activity as to present a clear safety hazard to the deputies.
  - 4. Being so close to the activity as to interfere with a deputy's effective communication with a suspect or witness.
- (c) The individual may not present an undue safety risk to the deputies, him/herself or others.

### 466.4 DEPUTY RESPONSE

Deputies should promptly request that a supervisor respond to the scene whenever it appears that anyone recording activities may be interfering with an investigation or it is believed that the recording may be evidence. If practicable, deputies should wait for the supervisor to arrive before taking enforcement action or seizing any cameras or recording media.

Whenever practicable, deputies or supervisors should give clear and concise warnings to individuals who are conducting themselves in a manner that would cause their recording or

## *Public Recording of Law Enforcement Activity*

---

behavior to be unlawful. Accompanying the warnings should be clear directions on what an individual can do to be compliant; directions should be specific enough to allow compliance. For example, rather than directing an individual to clear the area, a deputy could advise the person that he/she may continue observing and recording from the sidewalk across the street.

If an arrest or other significant enforcement activity is taken as the result of a recording that interferes with law enforcement activity, deputies shall document in a report the nature and extent of the interference or other unlawful behavior and the warnings that were issued.

### **466.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

A supervisor should respond to the scene when requested or any time the circumstances indicate a likelihood of interference or other unlawful behavior.

The supervisor should review the situation with the deputy and:

- (a) Request any additional assistance as needed to ensure a safe environment.
- (b) Take a lead role in communicating with individuals who are observing or recording regarding any appropriate limitations on their location or behavior. When practical, the encounter should be recorded.
- (c) When practicable, allow adequate time for individuals to respond to requests for a change of location or behavior.
- (d) Ensure that any enforcement, seizure or other actions are consistent with this policy and constitutional and state law.
- (e) Explain alternatives for individuals who wish to express concern about the conduct of Department members, such as how and where to file a complaint.

### **466.6 SEIZING RECORDINGS AS EVIDENCE**

Deputies should not seize recording devices or media unless (42 USC § 2000aa):

- (a) There is probable cause to believe the person recording has committed or is committing a crime to which the recording relates, and the recording is reasonably necessary for prosecution of the person.
  - 1. Absent exigency or consent, a warrant should be sought before seizing or viewing such recordings. Reasonable steps may be taken to prevent erasure of the recording.
- (b) There is reason to believe that the immediate seizure of such recordings is necessary to prevent serious bodily injury or death of any person.
- (c) The person consents.
  - 1. To ensure that the consent is voluntary, the request should not be made in a threatening or coercive manner.
  - 2. If the original recording is provided, a copy of the recording should be provided to the recording party, if practicable. The recording party should be permitted to be present while the copy is being made, if feasible. Another way to obtain the

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Public Recording of Law Enforcement Activity*

---

evidence is to transmit a copy of the recording from a device to a department-owned device.

Recording devices and media that are seized will be submitted within the guidelines of the Property and Evidence Policy.

# First Amendment Assemblies

## 467.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance for responding to public assemblies or demonstrations.

## 467.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office respects the rights of people to peaceably assemble. It is the policy of this department not to unreasonably interfere with, harass, intimidate or discriminate against persons engaged in the lawful exercise of their rights, while also preserving the peace, protecting life and preventing the destruction of property.

## 467.3 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Individuals or groups present on the public way, such as public facilities, streets or walkways, generally have the right to assemble, rally, demonstrate, protest or otherwise express their views and opinions through varying forms of communication, including the distribution of printed matter. These rights may be limited by laws or ordinances regulating such matters as the obstruction of individual or vehicle access or egress, trespass, noise, picketing, distribution of handbills and leafleting, and loitering. However, deputies shall not take action or fail to take action based on the opinions being expressed.

Participant behavior during a demonstration or other public assembly can vary. This may include, but is not limited to:

- Lawful, constitutionally protected actions and speech.
- Civil disobedience (typically involving minor criminal acts).
- Rioting.

All of these behaviors may be present during the same event. Therefore, it is imperative that law enforcement actions are measured and appropriate for the behaviors deputies may encounter. This is particularly critical if force is being used. Adaptable strategies and tactics are essential. The purpose of a law enforcement presence at the scene of public assemblies and demonstrations should be to preserve the peace, to protect life and prevent the destruction of property.

Deputies should not:

- (a) Engage in assembly or demonstration-related discussion with participants.
- (b) Harass, confront or intimidate participants.
- (c) Seize the cameras, cell phones or materials of participants or observers unless a deputy is placing a person under lawful arrest.

Supervisors should continually observe department members under their commands to ensure that members' interaction with participants and their response to crowd dynamics is appropriate.

## *First Amendment Assemblies*

---

### **467.3.1 PHOTOGRAPHS AND VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Photographs and video recording, when appropriate, can serve a number of purposes, including support of criminal prosecutions by documenting criminal acts; assistance in evaluating department performance; serving as training material; recording the use of dispersal orders; and facilitating a response to allegations of improper law enforcement conduct.

Photographs and videos will not be used or retained for the sole purpose of collecting or maintaining information about the political, religious or social views of associations, or the activities of any individual, group, association, organization, corporation, business or partnership, unless such information directly relates to an investigation of criminal activities and there is reasonable suspicion that the subject of the information is involved in criminal conduct.

### **467.4 UNPLANNED EVENTS**

When responding to an unplanned or spontaneous public gathering, the first responding deputy should conduct an assessment of conditions, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Location
- Number of participants
- Apparent purpose of the event
- Leadership (whether it is apparent and/or whether it is effective)
- Any initial indicators of unlawful or disruptive activity
- Indicators that lawful use of public facilities, streets or walkways will be impacted
- Ability and/or need to continue monitoring the incident

Initial assessment information should be promptly communicated to Dispatch, and the assignment of a supervisor should be requested. Additional resources should be requested as appropriate. The responding supervisor shall assume command of the incident until command is expressly assumed by another, and the assumption of command is communicated to the involved members. A clearly defined command structure that is consistent with the Incident Command System (ICS) should be established as resources are deployed.

### **467.5 PLANNED EVENT PREPARATION**

For planned events, comprehensive, incident-specific operational plans should be developed. The ICS should be considered for such events.

#### **467.5.1 INFORMATION GATHERING AND ASSESSMENT**

In order to properly assess the potential impact of a public assembly or demonstration on public safety and order, relevant information should be collected and vetted. This may include:

- Information obtained from outreach to group organizers or leaders.
- Information about past and potential unlawful conduct associated with the event or similar events.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *First Amendment Assemblies*

---

- The potential time, duration, scope and type of planned activities.
- Any other information related to the goal of providing a balanced response to criminal activity and the protection of public safety interests.

Information should be obtained in a transparent manner, and the sources documented. Relevant information should be communicated to the appropriate parties in a timely manner.

Information will be obtained in a lawful manner and will not be based solely on the purpose or content of the assembly or demonstration, or the race, ethnicity, national origin or religion of the participants (or any other characteristic that is unrelated to criminal conduct or the identification of a criminal subject).

### 467.5.2 OPERATIONAL PLANS

An operational planning team with responsibility for event planning and management should be established. The planning team should develop an operational plan for the event.

The operational plan will minimally provide for:

- (a) Command assignments, chain of command structure, roles and responsibilities.
- (b) Staffing and resource allocation.
- (c) Management of criminal investigations.
- (d) Designation of uniform of the day and related safety equipment (e.g., helmets, shields).
- (e) Deployment of specialized resources.
- (f) Event communications and interoperability in a multijurisdictional event.
- (g) Liaison with demonstration leaders and external agencies.
- (h) Liaison with County government and legal staff.
- (i) Media relations.
- (j) Logistics: food, fuel, replacement equipment, duty hours, relief and transportation.
- (k) Traffic management plans.
- (l) First aid and emergency medical service provider availability.
- (m) Prisoner transport and detention.
- (n) Review of policies regarding public assemblies and use of force in crowd control.
- (o) Parameters for declaring an unlawful assembly.
- (p) Arrest protocol, including management of mass arrests.
- (q) Protocol for recording information flow and decisions.
- (r) Rules of engagement, including rules of conduct, protocols for field force extraction and arrests, and any authorization required for the use of force.
- (s) Protocol for handling complaints during the event.
- (t) Parameters for the use of body-worn cameras and other portable recording devices.

## *First Amendment Assemblies*

---

### **467.5.3 MUTUAL AID AND EXTERNAL RESOURCES**

The magnitude and anticipated duration of an event may necessitate interagency cooperation and coordination. The assigned Incident Commander should ensure that any required memorandums of understanding or other agreements are properly executed, and that any anticipated mutual aid is requested and facilitated (see the Mutual Aid and Outside Agency Assistance Policy).

### **467.6 UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY DISPERSAL ORDERS**

If a public gathering or demonstration remains peaceful and nonviolent, and there is no reasonably imminent threat to persons or property, the Incident Commander should generally authorize continued monitoring of the event.

Should the Incident Commander make a determination that public safety is presently or is about to be jeopardized, he/she or the authorized designee should attempt to verbally persuade event organizers or participants to disperse of their own accord. Warnings and advisements may be communicated through established communications links with leaders and/or participants or to the group.

When initial attempts at verbal persuasion are unsuccessful, the Incident Commander or the authorized designee should make a clear standardized announcement to the gathering that the event is an unlawful assembly, and should order the dispersal of the participants. The announcement should be communicated by whatever methods are reasonably available to ensure that the content of the message is clear and that it has been heard by the participants. The announcement should be amplified, made in different languages as appropriate, made from multiple locations in the affected area and documented by audio and video. The announcement should provide information about what law enforcement actions will take place if illegal behavior continues and should identify routes for egress. A reasonable time to disperse should be allowed following a dispersal order.

### **467.7 USE OF FORCE**

Use of force is governed by current department policy and applicable law (see the Use of Force, Handcuffing and Restraints, Control Devices and Techniques, and Conducted Energy Device policies).

Individuals refusing to comply with lawful orders (e.g., nonviolent refusal to disperse) should be given a clear verbal warning and a reasonable opportunity to comply. If an individual refuses to comply with lawful orders, the Incident Commander shall evaluate the type of resistance and adopt a reasonable response in order to accomplish the law enforcement mission (such as dispersal or arrest of those acting in violation of the law). Control devices and TASER® devices should be considered only when the participants' conduct reasonably appears to present the potential to harm deputies, themselves or others, or will result in substantial property loss or damage (see the Control Devices and Techniques and the Conducted Energy Device policies).

## *First Amendment Assemblies*

---

Force or control devices, including oleoresin capsaicin (OC), should be directed toward individuals and not toward groups or crowds, unless specific individuals cannot reasonably be targeted due to extreme circumstances, such as a riotous crowd.

Any use of force by a member of this department shall be documented promptly, completely and accurately in an appropriate report. The type of report required may depend on the nature of the incident.

### **467.8 ARRESTS**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office should respond to unlawful behavior in a manner that is consistent with the operational plan. If practicable, warnings or advisements should be communicated prior to arrest.

Mass arrests should be employed only when alternate tactics and strategies have been, or reasonably appear likely to be, unsuccessful. Mass arrests shall only be undertaken upon the order of the Incident Commander or the authorized designee. There must be probable cause for each arrest.

If employed, mass arrest protocols should fully integrate:

- (a) Reasonable measures to address the safety of deputies and arrestees.
- (b) Dedicated arrest, booking and report writing teams.
- (c) Timely access to medical care.
- (d) Timely access to legal resources.
- (e) Timely processing of arrestees.
- (f) Full accountability for arrestees and evidence.
- (g) Coordination and cooperation with the prosecuting authority, jail and courts (see the Cite and Release Policy).

### **467.9 MEDIA RELATIONS**

The Public Information Officer should use all available avenues of communication, including press releases, briefings, press conferences and social media to maintain open channels of communication with media representatives and the public about the status and progress of the event, taking all opportunities to reassure the public about the professional management of the event (see the News Media Relations Policy).

### **467.10 DEMOBILIZATION**

When appropriate, the Incident Commander or the authorized designee should implement a phased and orderly withdrawal of law enforcement resources. All relieved personnel should promptly complete any required reports, including use of force reports, and account for all issued equipment and vehicles to their supervisors prior to returning to normal operational duties.

## *First Amendment Assemblies*

---

### **467.11 POST EVENT**

The Incident Commander should designate a member to assemble full documentation of the event, to include the following:

- (a) Operational plan
- (b) Any incident logs
- (c) Any assignment logs
- (d) Vehicle, fuel, equipment and supply records
- (e) Incident, arrest, use of force, injury and property damage reports
- (f) Photographs, audio/video recordings, Dispatch records/tapes
- (g) Media accounts (print and broadcast media)

#### **467.11.1 AFTER-ACTION REPORTING**

The Incident Commander should work with County legal counsel, as appropriate, to prepare a comprehensive after-action report of the event, explaining all incidents where force was used including the following:

- (a) Date, time and description of the event
- (b) Actions taken and outcomes (e.g., injuries, property damage, arrests)
- (c) Problems identified
- (d) Significant events
- (e) Recommendations for improvement; opportunities for training should be documented in a generic manner, without identifying individuals or specific incidents, facts or circumstances.

### **467.12 TRAINING**

Department members should receive periodic training regarding this policy, as well as the dynamics of crowd control and incident management (Penal Code § 13514.5). The Department should, when practicable, train with its external and mutual aid partners.

## Civil Disputes

### 468.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office with guidance for addressing conflicts between persons when no criminal investigation or enforcement action is warranted (e.g., civil matters), with the goal of minimizing any potential for violence or criminal acts.

The Domestic Violence Policy will address specific legal mandates related to domestic violence court orders. References in this policy to "court orders" apply to any order of a court that does not require arrest or enforcement by the terms of the order or by California law.

### 468.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes that a law enforcement presence at a civil dispute can play an important role in the peace and safety of the community. Subject to available resources, members of this department may assist at the scene of civil disputes with the primary goal of safeguarding persons and property, preventing criminal activity and maintaining the peace. When handling civil disputes, members will remain impartial, maintain a calm presence, give consideration to all sides and refrain from giving legal or inappropriate advice.

### 468.3 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

When appropriate, members handling a civil dispute should encourage the involved parties to seek the assistance of resolution services or take the matter to the civil courts. Members must not become personally involved in disputes and shall at all times remain impartial.

While not intended to be an exhaustive list, members should give considerations to the following when handling civil disputes:

- (a) Civil disputes tend to be confrontational and members should be alert that they can escalate to violence very quickly. De-escalation techniques should be used when appropriate.
- (b) Members should not dismiss alleged or observed criminal violations as a civil matter and should initiate the appropriate investigation and report when criminal activity is apparent.
- (c) Members shall not provide legal advice, however, when appropriate, members should inform the parties when they are at risk of violating criminal laws.
- (d) Members are reminded that they shall not enter a residence or other non-public location without legal authority including valid consent.
- (e) Members should not take an unreasonable amount of time assisting in these matters and generally should contact a supervisor if it appears that peacekeeping efforts longer than 30 minutes are warranted.

## *Civil Disputes*

---

### **468.4 COURT ORDERS**

Disputes involving court orders can be complex. Where no mandate exists for a deputy to make an arrest for a violation of a court order, the matter should be addressed by documenting any apparent court order violation in a report. If there appears to be a more immediate need for enforcement action, the investigating deputy should consult a supervisor prior to making any arrest.

If a person appears to be violating the terms of a court order but is disputing the validity of the order or its applicability, the investigating deputy should document the following:

- (a) The person's knowledge of the court order or whether proof of service exists.
- (b) Any specific reason or rationale the involved person offers for not complying with the terms of the order.

A copy of the court order should be attached to the report when available. The report should be forwarded to the appropriate prosecutor. The report should also be forwarded to the court issuing the order with a notice that the report was also forwarded to the prosecutor for review.

#### **468.4.1 STANDBY REQUESTS**

Civil standby requests should be approved in advance by the on duty shift supervisor. Most civil standby requests should be coordinated with the Civil Division as these matters can be very time consuming. Generally, preplanned civil standby requests are the best option as patrol resources may be committed to other higher priority calls for service.

A Deputy responding to a call for standby assistance to retrieve property should meet the person requesting assistance at a neutral location to discuss the process. The person should be advised that items that are disputed will not be allowed to be removed. The member may advise the person to seek private legal advice as to the distribution of disputed property.

Members should accompany the person to the location of the property. Members should ask if the other party will allow removal of the property or whether the other party would remove the property.

If the other party is uncooperative, the person requesting standby assistance should be instructed to seek private legal advice and obtain a court order to obtain the items. Deputies should not order the other party to allow entry or the removal of any items. If there is a restraining or similar order against the person requesting standby assistance, that person should be asked to leave the scene or they may be subject to arrest for violation of the order.

If the other party is not present at the location, the member will not allow entry into the location or the removal of property from the location.

### **468.5 VEHICLES AND PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Deputies may be faced with disputes regarding possession or ownership of vehicles or other personal property. Deputies may review documents provided by parties or available databases (e.g., vehicle registration), but should be aware that legal possession of vehicles or personal property can be complex. Generally, deputies should not take any enforcement action unless a

## *Civil Disputes*

---

crime is apparent. The people and the vehicle or personal property involved should be identified and the incident documented.

### **468.6 REAL PROPERTY**

Disputes over possession or occupancy of real property (e.g., land, homes, apartments) should generally be handled through a person seeking a court order.

# Suspicious Activity Reporting

## 469.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for reporting and investigating suspicious and criminal activity.

### 469.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Involved party** - An individual who has been observed engaging in suspicious activity, as defined in this policy, when no definitive criminal activity can be identified, thus precluding the person's identification as a suspect.

**Suspicious activity** - Any reported or observed activity that a member reasonably believes may have a nexus to any criminal act or attempted criminal act, or to foreign or domestic terrorism. Race, ethnicity, national origin or religious affiliation should not be considered as factors that create suspicion (although these factors may be used as specific suspect descriptions). Examples of suspicious activity may include, but are not limited to:

- Suspected pre-operational surveillance or intelligence gathering (e.g., photographing security features, asking questions about sensitive security-related subjects).
- Tests of security measures and response to incidents (e.g., "dry run," creating false alarms, attempts to enter secure areas without authorization).
- Suspicious purchases (e.g., purchasing large quantities of otherwise legal items, such as fertilizer, that could be used to create an explosive or other dangerous device).
- An individual in possession of such things as a hoax explosive or dispersal device, sensitive materials (e.g., passwords, access codes, classified government information), or coded or ciphered literature or correspondence.

**Suspicious Activity Report (SAR)** - An incident report used to document suspicious activity.

## 469.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes the need to protect the public from criminal conduct and acts of terrorism and shall lawfully collect, maintain and disseminate information regarding suspicious activities, while safeguarding civil liberties and privacy protections.

## 469.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Area Lieutenant, Detective Sergeant and authorized designees will manage Suspicious Activity Reporting activities. Authorized designees should include supervisors who are responsible for department participation in criminal intelligence systems as outlined in the Criminal Organizations Policy.

The responsibilities of the Area Lieutenant and Detective Sergeant include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Remaining familiar with those databases available to the Department that would facilitate the purpose of this policy.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Suspicious Activity Reporting*

---

- (b) Maintaining adequate training in the area of intelligence gathering to ensure no information is being maintained that would violate the law or civil rights of any individual.
- (c) Ensuring a process is available that would allow members to report relevant information. The process should be designed to promote efficient and quick reporting, and should not be cumbersome, duplicative or complicated.
- (d) Ensuring that members are made aware of the purpose and value of documenting information regarding suspicious activity, as well as the databases and other information resources that are available to the Department.
- (e) Ensuring that Suspicious Activity Reporting information is appropriately disseminated to members in accordance with their job responsibilities.
- (f) Coordinating investigative follow-up, if appropriate.
- (g) Coordinating with any appropriate agency or fusion center.
- (h) Ensuring that, as resources are available, the Department conducts outreach that is designed to encourage members of the community to report suspicious activity and that outlines what they should look for and how they should report it (e.g., website, public service announcements).

### **469.4 REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION**

Any department member receiving information regarding suspicious activity should take any necessary immediate and appropriate action, including a request for tactical response or immediate notification of specialized entities, when applicable. Any civilian member who receives such information should ensure that it is passed on to a deputy in a timely manner.

If the suspicious activity is not directly related to a reportable crime, the member should prepare a Suspicious Activity Reporting and include information about involved parties and the circumstances of the incident. If, during any investigation, a deputy becomes aware of suspicious activity that is unrelated to the current investigation, the information should be documented separately in a Suspicious Activity Reporting and not included in the original incident report. The report number of the original incident should be included in the Suspicious Activity Reporting as a cross reference. A Suspicious Activity Reporting should be processed as any other incident report.

### **469.5 HANDLING INFORMATION**

The Records Division will forward copies of Suspicious Activity Reports, in a timely manner, to the following:

- Detective Unit supervisor
- Crime Analysis Unit
- Other authorized designees

## Medical Aid and Response

### 470.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy recognizes that members often encounter persons who appear to be in need of medical aid and establishes a law enforcement response to such situations.

### 470.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that all deputies and other designated members be trained to provide emergency medical aid and to facilitate an emergency medical response.

### 470.3 FIRST RESPONDING MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Whenever practicable, members should take appropriate steps to provide initial medical aid (e.g., first aid, CPR and use of an automated external defibrillator (AED)) in accordance with their training and current certification levels. This should be done for those in need of immediate care and only when the member can safely do so.

Prior to initiating medical aid, the member should contact Dispatch and request response by emergency medical services (EMS) as the member deems appropriate.

Members should follow universal precautions when providing medical aid, such as wearing gloves and avoiding contact with bodily fluids, consistent with the Communicable Diseases Policy. Members should use a barrier or bag device to perform rescue breathing.

When requesting EMS, the member should provide Dispatch with information for relay to EMS personnel in order to enable an appropriate response, including:

- (a) The location where EMS is needed.
- (b) The nature of the incident.
- (c) Any known scene hazards.
- (d) Information on the person in need of EMS, such as:
  - 1. Signs and symptoms as observed by the member.
  - 2. Changes in apparent condition.
  - 3. Number of patients, sex and age, if known.
  - 4. Whether the person is conscious, breathing and alert, or is believed to have consumed drugs or alcohol.
  - 5. Whether the person is showing signs or symptoms of excited delirium or other agitated chaotic behavior.

Members should stabilize the scene whenever practicable while awaiting the arrival of EMS.

Members should not direct EMS personnel whether to transport the person for treatment.

## *Medical Aid and Response*

---

### **470.4 TRANSPORTING ILL AND INJURED PERSONS**

Except in extraordinary cases where alternatives are not reasonably available, members should not transport persons who are unconscious, who have serious injuries or who may be seriously ill. EMS personnel should be called to handle patient transportation.

Deputies should search any person who is in custody before releasing that person to EMS for transport.

A deputy should accompany any person in custody during transport in an ambulance when requested by EMS personnel, when it reasonably appears necessary to provide security, when it is necessary for investigative purposes or when so directed by a supervisor.

Members should not provide emergency escort for medical transport or civilian vehicles.

### **470.5 PERSONS REFUSING EMS CARE**

If a person who is not in custody refuses EMS care or refuses to be transported to a medical facility, a deputy shall not force that person to receive care or be transported. However, members may assist EMS personnel when EMS personnel determine the person lacks mental capacity to understand the consequences of refusing medical care or to make an informed decision and the lack of immediate medical attention may result in serious bodily injury or the death of the person.

In cases where mental illness may be a factor, the deputy should consider proceeding with a 72-hour treatment and evaluation commitment (5150 commitment) process in accordance with the Mental Illness Commitments Policy.

If a deputy believes that a person who is in custody requires EMS care and the person refuses, he/she should encourage the person to receive medical treatment. The deputy may also consider contacting a family member to help persuade the person to agree to treatment or who may be able to authorize treatment for the person.

If the person still refuses, the deputy will require the person to be transported to the nearest medical facility. In such cases, the deputy should consult with a supervisor prior to the transport.

Members shall not sign refusal-for-treatment forms or forms accepting financial responsibility for treatment.

#### **470.5.1 SICK OR INJURED ARRESTEE**

If an arrestee appears ill or injured, or claims illness or injury, he/she should be medically cleared prior to booking. If the deputy has reason to believe the arrestee is feigning injury or illness, the deputy should contact a supervisor, who will determine whether medical clearance will be obtained prior to booking.

If the jail or detention facility refuses to accept custody of an arrestee based on medical screening, the deputy should note the name of the facility person refusing to accept custody and the reason for refusal, and should notify a supervisor to determine the appropriate action.

## *Medical Aid and Response*

---

Arrestees who appear to have a serious medical issue should be transported by ambulance. Deputies shall not transport an arrestee to a hospital without a supervisor's approval.

### **470.6 MEDICAL ATTENTION RELATED TO USE OF FORCE**

Specific guidelines for medical attention for injuries sustained from a use of force may be found in the Use of Force, Handcuffing and Restraints, Control Devices and Techniques, and Conducted Energy Device policies.

### **470.7 AIR AMBULANCE**

Generally, when on-scene, EMS personnel will be responsible for determining whether an air ambulance response should be requested. An air ambulance may be appropriate when there are victims with life-threatening injuries or who require specialized treatment (e.g., gunshot wounds, burns, obstetrical cases), and distance or other known delays will affect the EMS response.

The Aviation Unit Manager and/or the Chief Pilot should develop guidelines for air ambulance landings or enter into local operating agreements for the use of air ambulances, as applicable. In creating those guidelines, the Department should identify:

- Responsibility and authority for designating a landing zone and determining the size of the landing zone.
- Responsibility for securing the area and maintaining that security once the landing zone is identified.
- Consideration of the air ambulance provider's minimum standards for proximity to vertical obstructions and surface composition (e.g., dirt, gravel, pavement, concrete, grass).
- Consideration of the air ambulance provider's minimum standards for horizontal clearance from structures, fences, power poles, antennas or roadways.
- Responsibility for notifying the appropriate highway or transportation agencies if a roadway is selected as a landing zone.
- Procedures for ground personnel to communicate with flight personnel during the operation.

One department member at the scene should be designated as the air ambulance communications contact. Headlights, spotlights and flashlights should not be aimed upward at the air ambulance. Members should direct vehicle and pedestrian traffic away from the landing zone.

Members should follow these cautions when near an air ambulance:

- Never approach the aircraft until signaled by the flight crew.
- Always approach the aircraft from the front.
- Avoid the aircraft's tail rotor area.
- Wear eye protection during landing and take-off.
- Do not carry or hold items, such as IV bags, above the head.

## *Medical Aid and Response*

---

- Ensure that no one smokes near the aircraft.

### **470.8 AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) USE**

A member may use an AED only after receiving appropriate training from an approved public safety first aid and CPR course (22 CCR 100014; 22 CCR 100017; 22 CCR 100018).

#### **470.8.1 AED USER RESPONSIBILITY**

Members who are issued AEDs for use in department vehicles should check the AED at the beginning of the shift to ensure it is properly charged and functioning. Any AED that is not functioning properly will be taken out of service and given to the Training Manager who is responsible for ensuring appropriate maintenance.

Following use of an AED, the device shall be cleaned and/or decontaminated as required. The electrodes and/or pads will be replaced as recommended by the AED manufacturer.

Any member who uses an AED should contact Dispatch as soon as possible and request response by EMS.

#### **470.8.2 AED REPORTING**

Any member using an AED will complete an incident report detailing its use.

#### **470.8.3 AED TRAINING AND MAINTENANCE**

The First Aid/CPR Instructors should ensure appropriate training and refresher training is provided to members authorized to use an AED. A list of authorized members and training records shall be made available for inspection by the local EMS agency (LEMSA) or EMS authority upon request (22 CCR 100021; 22 CCR 100022; 22 CCR 100029).

The First Aid/CPR Instructors are responsible for ensuring AED devices are appropriately maintained and will retain records of all maintenance in accordance with the established records retention schedule (22 CCR 100021).

### **470.9 ADMINISTRATION OF OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION**

Members may administer opioid overdose medication in accordance with protocol specified by the licensed health care provider who prescribed the overdose medication for use by the member and (Civil Code § 1714.22; 22 CCR 100019):

- (a) When trained and tested to demonstrate competence following initial instruction.
- (b) When authorized by the medical director of the LEMSAs.
- (c) In accordance with California Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) standards.

#### **470.9.1 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members who are qualified to administer opioid overdose medication, such as naloxone, should handle, store and administer the medication consistent with their training. Members should check the medication and associated administration equipment at the beginning of their shift to ensure

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Medical Aid and Response*

---

they are serviceable and not expired. Any expired medication or unserviceable administration equipment should be removed from service and given to the Training Manager.

Any member who administers an opioid overdose medication should contact Dispatch as soon as possible and request response by EMS.

#### **470.9.2 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION REPORTING**

Any member administering opioid overdose medication should detail its use in an appropriate report.

The First Aid/CPR Instructors will ensure that the Records Supervisor is provided enough information to meet applicable state reporting requirements.

#### **470.9.3 OPIOID OVERDOSE MEDICATION TRAINING**

The Training Manager should ensure initial and refresher training is provided to members authorized to administer opioid overdose medication. Training should be coordinated with the local health department and comply with the requirements in 22 CCR 100019 and any applicable POST standards (Civil Code § 1714.22).

### **470.10 ADMINISTRATION OF EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS**

The Sheriff may authorize the acquisition of epinephrine auto-injectors for use by Department members as provided by Health and Safety Code § 1797.197a. The Training Manager shall create and maintain an operations plan for the storage, maintenance, use and disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors as required by Health and Safety Code § 1797.197a(f).

Trained members who possess valid certification may administer an epinephrine auto-injector for suspected anaphylaxis (Health and Safety Code § 1797.197a(b); 22 CCR 100019).

#### **470.10.1 EPINEPHRINE USER RESPONSIBILITIES**

Members should handle, store and administer epinephrine auto-injectors consistent with their training and the Department operations plan. Members should check the auto-injectors at the beginning of their shift to ensure the medication is not expired. Any expired medication should be removed from service in accordance with the Department Operations Plan.

Any member who administers an epinephrine auto-injector medication should contact Dispatch as soon as possible and request response by EMS (Health and Safety Code § 1797.197a(b)).

#### **470.10.2 EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTOR REPORTING**

Any member who administers an epinephrine auto-injector should detail its use in an appropriate report.

The Training Manager should ensure that the Records Supervisor is provided enough information for required reporting to the EMS Authority within 30 days after each use (Health and Safety Code § 1797.197a(f)).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Medical Aid and Response*

---

Records regarding the acquisition and disposition of epinephrine auto-injectors shall be maintained pursuant to the Department established records retention schedule but no less than three years (Business and Professions Code § 4119.4(d)).

### 470.10.3 EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTOR TRAINING

The Training Manager should ensure that members authorized to administer epinephrine auto-injectors are provided with initial and refresher training that meets the requirements of Health and Safety Code § 1797.197a(c) and 22 CCR 100019.

## **Chapter 5 - Traffic Operations**

## Traffic Function and Responsibility

### 500.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The ultimate goal of traffic law enforcement is to reduce traffic collisions. This may be achieved through the application of such techniques as geographic/temporal assignment of personnel and equipment and the establishment of preventive patrols to deal with specific categories of unlawful driving behavior. Traffic enforcement techniques are based on accident data, enforcement activity records, traffic volume, and traffic conditions. This department provides enforcement efforts toward violations, not only in proportion to the frequency of their occurrence in accident situations, but also in terms of traffic-related needs.

### 500.2 TRAFFIC DEPUTY DEPLOYMENT

Several factors are considered in the development of deployment schedules for deputies of the Merced County Sheriff's Office. Information provided by the California Statewide Integrated Traffic Reporting System (SWITRS) is a valuable resource for traffic accident occurrences and therefore deputy deployment. Some of the factors for analysis include:

- Location
- Time
- Day
- Violation factors

All deputies assigned to patrol or traffic enforcement functions will emphasize enforcement of accident causing violations during high accident hours and at locations of occurrence. All deputies will take directed enforcement action on request, and random enforcement action when appropriate against violators as a matter of routine. All deputies shall maintain high visibility while working general enforcement, especially at high accident locations.

Other factors to be considered for deployment are requests from the public, construction zones or special events.

### 500.3 ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement actions are commensurate with applicable laws and take into account the degree and severity of the violation committed. This department does not establish ticket quotas and the number of arrests or citations issued by any deputy shall not be used as the sole criterion for evaluating deputy overall performance (Vehicle Code § 41603). The visibility and quality of a deputy's work effort will be commensurate with the philosophy of this policy. Several methods are effective in the reduction of collisions:

## *Traffic Function and Responsibility*

---

### 500.3.1 WARNINGS

Warnings or other non-punitive enforcement actions should be considered in each situation and substituted for arrests or citations when circumstances warrant, especially in the case of inadvertent violations.

### 500.3.2 CITATIONS

Citations may be issued when a deputy believes it is appropriate. It is essential that deputies fully explain the rights and requirements imposed on motorists upon issuance of a citation for a traffic violation. Deputies should provide the following information at a minimum:

- (a) Explanation of the violation or charge
- (b) Court appearance procedure including the optional or mandatory appearance by the motorist
- (c) Notice of whether the motorist can enter a plea and pay the fine by mail or at the court

### 500.3.3 PHYSICAL ARREST

Physical arrest can be made on a number of criminal traffic offenses outlined in the Vehicle Code or Penal Code. These physical arrest cases usually deal with, but are not limited to:

- (a) Vehicular manslaughter
- (b) Felony and misdemeanor driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- (c) Felony or misdemeanor hit-and-run
- (d) Refusal to sign notice to appear
- (e) Any other misdemeanor at the discretion of the deputy, such as reckless driving with extenuating circumstances

## **500.4 SUSPENDED OR REVOKED DRIVERS LICENSES**

If a deputy contacts a traffic violator for driving on a suspended or revoked license, the deputy may issue a traffic citation pursuant to Vehicle Code § 14601.

If a computer check of a traffic violator's license status reveals a suspended or revoked driver license and the traffic violator still has his or her license in possession, the license shall be seized by the deputy. The deputy shall verbally advise the traffic violator of the suspension or revocation and issue the citation. The deputy will be responsible for filling out the Verbal Notice form (DMV form DL-310) and causing that form and license to be forwarded to the Department of Motor Vehicles.

## **500.5 HIGH-VISIBILITY VESTS**

The Department has provided American National Standards Institute (ANSI) Class II high-visibility vests to increase the visibility of department members who may be exposed to hazards presented by passing traffic, maneuvering or operating vehicles, machinery and equipment (23 CFR 655.601; 8 CCR 1598).

## *Traffic Function and Responsibility*

---

Although intended primarily for use while performing traffic related assignments, high-visibility vests should be worn at any time increased visibility would improve the safety or efficiency of the member.

### 500.5.1 REQUIRED USE

Except when working in a potentially adversarial or confrontational role, such as during vehicle stops, high-visibility vests should be worn at any time it is anticipated that an employee will be exposed to the hazards of approaching traffic or construction and recovery equipment. Examples of when high-visibility vests should be worn include traffic control duties, accident investigations, lane closures and while at disaster scenes, or anytime high visibility is desirable. When emergency conditions preclude the immediate donning of the vest, deputies should retrieve and wear the vest as soon as conditions reasonably permit. Use of the vests shall also be mandatory when directed by a supervisor.

Vests maintained in the investigation units may be used any time a plainclothes deputy might benefit from being readily identified as a member of law enforcement.

### 500.5.2 CARE AND STORAGE OF HIGH-VISIBILITY VESTS

High-visibility vests shall be maintained in the trunk of each patrol and investigation unit, in the side box of each sheriff's motorcycle and in the saddlebag or gear bag of each sheriff's bicycle. Each vest should be stored inside the re-sealable plastic bag provided to protect and maintain the vest in a serviceable condition. Before going into service each employee shall ensure a serviceable high-visibility vest is properly stored.

A supply of high-visibility vests will be maintained in the equipment room for replacement of damaged or unserviceable vests. The Training Manager should be promptly notified whenever the supply of vests in the equipment room needs replenishing.

# Traffic Collision Reporting

## 502.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Subject to jurisdictional responsibilities and agreements with other law enforcement agencies, the Merced County Sheriff's Office investigates and prepares traffic collision reports in compliance with the California Highway Patrol Collision Investigation Manual (CIM) and as a public service makes traffic collision reports available to the community with some exceptions.

## 502.2 RESPONSIBILITY

The Training Manager will be responsible for distribution of the Collision Investigation Manual and will receive all changes in the state manual and ensure conformity with this policy.

## 502.3 TRAFFIC COLLISION REPORTING

All traffic collision reports taken by members of this department shall be forwarded to the Records Management System for data entry. The Records Division will be responsible for monthly and quarterly reports on traffic collision statistics and will forward such information to the Operations Division Captain or other personnel as required.

## 502.4 REPORTING SITUATIONS

### 502.4.1 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS INVOLVING COUNTY VEHICLES

Traffic collision investigation reports shall be taken when a County-owned vehicle is involved in a traffic collision upon a roadway or highway wherein any damage or injury results. A general information report may be taken in lieu of a traffic collision report (CHP 555 form) at the direction of a supervisor when the collision occurs on private property or does not involve another vehicle. Whenever there is damage to a County vehicle, a Vehicle Damage Report shall be completed and forwarded to the appropriate Division Captain.

Photographs of the collision scene and vehicle damage shall be taken at the discretion of the traffic investigator or any supervisor.

### 502.4.2 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES

When an employee of this department, either on-duty or off-duty, is involved in a traffic collision within the jurisdiction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office resulting in a serious injury or fatality, the Operations Division Captain or the shift supervisor, may notify the California Highway Patrol for assistance.

### 502.4.3 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS WITH OTHER COUNTY EMPLOYEES OR OFFICIALS

The on-duty supervisor may request assistance from the California Highway Patrol for the investigation of any traffic collision involving any civilian(s), County official or employee where any injury, serious injury or fatality has occurred.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Traffic Collision Reporting*

---

#### 502.4.4 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ON PRIVATE PROPERTY

In compliance with the Collision Investigation Manual, traffic collision reports shall not be taken for traffic collisions occurring on private property unless there is a death or injury to any person involved, a hit-and-run violation, or Vehicle Code violation. An Incident Report may be taken at the discretion of any supervisor.

#### 502.4.5 TRAFFIC COLLISIONS ON ROADWAYS OR HIGHWAYS

Traffic collision reports shall be taken when they occur on a roadway or highway within the jurisdiction of this department under any of the following circumstances:

- (a) When there is a death or injury to any persons involved in the collision
- (b) When there is an identifiable violation of the Vehicle Code
- (c) When a report is requested by any involved driver

#### 502.4.6 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS OF TRAFFIC COLLISIONS

Any County-owned or leased vehicle involved in a collision which is driven by a department employee shall be investigated. This investigative process will require 1) the applicable law enforcement vehicle collision investigation to determine the cause of the collision and 2) the department's administrative investigation to determine whether the collision was "Preventable" or "Non-Preventable". As such, any employee (Operations and Corrections) who is investigated per this policy is entitled to the same procedural rights and protections as in any administrative investigation.

After the appropriate investigating agency's (e.g., CHP or other respective jurisdiction) investigation is completed, the involved driver's immediate supervisor will review the investigating agency's findings and conclusions to determine whether the accident was:

1. "Preventable": when the driver was at fault or where utilizing appropriate and defensive driving techniques could have prevented the collision. 2. "Non-preventable": when the driver was not at fault when the accident could not have reasonably been prevented by use of defensive driving techniques and the circumstances of the situation. 3. "No-vehicle accident": when the cause of the damage was an intentional act or vandalism. Damage resulting from an intentional act such as ramming a vehicle is not an accident.

Preventable accidents will be classified as follows:

- A. Category 1: An accident that occurred because of misjudgment of clearance or failure to drive defensively (e.g., reversing into a vehicle while parking).
- B. Category 2: An accident that occurred because the driver was negligent and/or violated Departmental rules, policies, and procedures, or violated any section of the California Vehicle Code (e.g., talking on a cellular telephone), except those violations noted in Category 3.
- C. Category 3: An accident that occurred because the employee was under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs to any degree, or who flagrantly, willfully,

## *Traffic Collision Reporting*

---

or deliberately disregarded safety (e.g., ignoring a supervisor's order to terminate a pursuit).

The supervisor has the responsibility of adopting or challenging the investigating agency's findings. In the event of a disagreement with the investigation, the supervisor may request another review or conduct a parallel investigation. Once the investigating agency's findings are adopted, the supervisor will determine whether the accident was preventable or non-preventable. This determination will require an Operations Captain's concurrence.

Typically the investigations will not require the formalized Administrative Investigation approach (e.g., admonishment, representation, etc.) because of the statement collections by the investigating agency. However, depending on the nature, seriousness, and potential discipline to the employee, adherence to the formal Administrative Investigation procedures may be required. The format and length of the supervisor's departmental investigation will depend on the facts, circumstances, and seriousness of the accident and, in many cases, may be completed on one (1) page or less. The completed report, findings, and classification of the accident will be forwarded to the driver for review. If the employee disagrees with the decision, the employee must request, in writing, a review of the accident by a non-involved Operations Captain whose decision shall be final. The employee shall have the right, along with the presence of a representative, to present his or her case to the reviewing authority for reconsideration.

**DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES:** The level of disciplinary action taken for any given "preventable" accident will vary on a case-by-case basis depending on mitigating circumstances, prior driving record, etc. At a minimum, the driver shall attend a departmentally-approved traffic safety class. The length of the class will be determined by the respective supervisor.

### **502.5 NOTIFICATION OF TRAFFIC BUREAU SUPERVISION**

In the event of a serious injury or death related traffic collision or major traffic disruption, the on-duty supervisor shall notify the Operations Captain to relate the circumstances of the traffic collision and seek additional assistance if required.

## Vehicle Towing and Release

### 510.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides the procedures for towing a vehicle by or at the direction of the Merced County Sheriff's Office. Nothing in this policy shall require the [Department/Office] to tow a vehicle.

### 510.2 STORAGE AND IMPOUNDS

When circumstances permit, for example when towing a vehicle for parking or registration violations, the handling employee should, prior to having the vehicle towed, make a good faith effort to notify the owner of the vehicle that it is subject to removal. This may be accomplished by personal contact, telephone or by leaving a notice attached to the vehicle at least 24 hours prior to removal. If a vehicle presents a hazard, such as being abandoned on the roadway, it may be towed immediately. Further, if the towing or storage fees are anticipated to be extraordinary, the deputy should contact a supervisor prior to requesting the tow.

The responsibilities of those employees towing, storing or impounding a vehicle are listed below.

#### 510.2.1 VEHICLE STORAGE REPORT

[Department/Office] members requesting towing, storage or impound of a vehicle shall complete CHP Form 180 and accurately record the mileage and a description of property within the vehicle (Vehicle Code § 22850). A copy of the storage report should be given to the tow truck operator and the original shall be submitted to the Records Division as soon as practicable after the vehicle is stored.

#### 510.2.2 REMOVAL FROM TRAFFIC COLLISION SCENES

When a vehicle has been involved in a traffic collision and must be removed from the scene, the deputy shall have the driver select a towing company, if possible, and shall relay the request for the specified towing company to the dispatcher. When there is no preferred company requested, a company will be selected from the rotational list of towing companies in Dispatch.

If the owner is incapacitated, or for any reason it is necessary for the [Department/Office] to assume responsibility for a vehicle involved in a collision, the deputy shall request the dispatcher to call the official towing garage for the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department. The deputy will then store the vehicle using a CHP Form 180.

#### 510.2.3 STORAGE AT ARREST SCENES

Whenever a person in charge or in control of a vehicle is arrested, it is the policy of this [department/office] to provide reasonable safekeeping by storing the arrestee's vehicle subject to the exceptions described below. The vehicle, however, shall be stored whenever it is needed for the furtherance of the investigation or prosecution of the case, or when the community caretaker doctrine would reasonably suggest that the vehicle should be stored (e.g., traffic hazard, high crime area).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Towing and Release*

---

The following are examples of situations where consideration should be given to leaving a vehicle at the scene in lieu of storing, provided the vehicle can be lawfully parked and left in a reasonably secured and safe condition:

- Traffic related warrant arrest.
- Situations where the vehicle was not used to further the offense for which the driver was arrested.
- Whenever the licensed owner of the vehicle is present, willing, and able to take control of any vehicle not involved in criminal activity.
- Whenever the vehicle otherwise does not need to be stored and the owner requests that it be left at the scene. In such cases the owner shall be informed that the [Department/Office] will not be responsible for theft or damages.

#### 510.2.4 IMPOUNDMENT AT SOBRIETY CHECKPOINTS

Whenever a driver is stopped at a sobriety checkpoint and the only violation is that the operator is driving without a valid driver's license, the deputy shall make a reasonable attempt to identify the registered owner of the vehicle (Vehicle Code § 2814.2). The deputy shall release the vehicle to the registered owner if the person is a licensed driver, or to another licensed driver authorized by the registered owner, provided the vehicle is claimed prior to the conclusion of the checkpoint operation.

If the vehicle is released at the checkpoint, the deputy shall list on his/her copy of the notice to appear the name and driver's license number of the person to whom the vehicle is released.

When a vehicle cannot be released at the checkpoint, it shall be towed (Vehicle Code § 22651(p)). When a vehicle is removed at the checkpoint, it shall be released during the normal business hours of the storage facility to the registered owner or his/her agent upon presentation of a valid driver's license and current vehicle registration.

#### 510.2.5 DISPATCHER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receiving a request for towing, the dispatcher shall promptly telephone the specified authorized towing service. The deputy shall be advised when the request has been made and the towing service has been dispatched.

When there is no preferred company requested, the dispatcher shall call the next firm in rotation from the list of approved towing companies and shall make appropriate entries on that form to ensure the following firm is called on the next request.

#### 510.2.6 RECORDS DIVISION RESPONSIBILITY

Records personnel shall promptly enter pertinent data from the completed storage form (CHP Form 180) into the Stolen Vehicle System and return the form to the Patrol Lieutenant for approval (Vehicle Code § 22651.5(b); Vehicle Code § 22851.3(b); Vehicle Code § 22854.5).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Towing and Release*

---

Approved storage forms shall be promptly placed into the auto-file so that they are immediately available for release or review should inquiries be made.

Within 48 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, of the storage of any such vehicle it shall be the responsibility of the Records Division to determine the names and addresses of any individuals having an interest in the vehicle through DMV or CLETS computers. Notice shall be sent to all such individuals by first-class mail (Vehicle Code § 22851.3(d); Vehicle Code § 22852(a); Vehicle Code § 14602.6(a)(2)). The notice shall include the following (Vehicle Code § 22852(b)):

- (a) The name, address, and telephone number of this [Department/Office].
- (b) The location of the place of storage and description of the vehicle, which shall include, if available, the name or make, the manufacturer, the license plate number, and the mileage.
- (c) The authority and purpose for the removal of the vehicle.
- (d) A statement that, in order to receive their post-storage hearing, the owners, or their agents, shall request the hearing in person, writing, or by telephone within 10 days of the date appearing on the notice.

#### **510.2.7 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY**

When a stolen vehicle is recovered, the responsible deputy shall request Dispatch to contact the registered owner of the recovery and location of storage. The deputy will indicate in the report whether Dispatch was able to communicate the information to the registered owner.

#### **510.3 TOWING SERVICES**

The County of Merced County Sheriff's Department periodically selects a firm to act as the official tow service and awards a contract to that firm. This firm will be used in the following situations:

- (a) When it is necessary to safeguard a vehicle due to the inability of the owner or operator to take the required action.
- (b) When a vehicle is being held as evidence in connection with an investigation.
- (c) When it is otherwise necessary to store a motor vehicle. This would include situations involving the recovery of stolen or abandoned vehicles, and the removal from the streets of vehicles obstructing traffic in violation of state or local regulations.

#### **510.4 VEHICLE INVENTORY**

All property in a stored or impounded vehicle shall be inventoried and listed on the vehicle storage form. This includes the trunk and any compartments or containers, even if closed and/or locked. Members conducting inventory searches should be as thorough and accurate as practical in preparing an itemized inventory. These inventory procedures are for the purpose of protecting an owner's property while in sheriff's custody, to provide for the safety of deputies, and to protect the [Department/Office] against fraudulent claims of lost, stolen, or damaged property.

## *Vehicle Towing and Release*

---

### **510.5 SECURITY OF VEHICLES AND PROPERTY**

Unless it would cause an unreasonable delay in the completion of a vehicle impound/storage or create an issue of officer safety, deputies should make reasonable accommodations to permit a driver/owner to retrieve small items of value or personal need (e.g., cash, jewelry, cell phone, prescriptions) which are not considered evidence or contraband.

If a search of a vehicle leaves the vehicle or any property contained therein vulnerable to unauthorized entry, theft or damage, personnel conducting the search shall take such steps as are reasonably necessary to secure and/or preserve the vehicle or property from such hazards.

### **510.6 RELEASE OF VEHICLE**

The [Department/Office] will maintain a listed, 24-hour telephone number to provide information regarding impoundment of vehicles and the right of the registered owner to request a storage hearing. Releases for towed vehicles will be made available during regular, non-emergency business hours (Vehicle Code § 14602.6).

- (a) Vehicles removed pursuant to Vehicle Code § 22850 shall be released after proof of current registration is provided by the owner or the person in control of the vehicle and after all applicable fees are paid (Vehicle Code § 22850.3; Vehicle Code § 22850.5).
- (b) Vehicles removed that require payment of parking fines or proof of valid driver's license shall only be released upon presentation of proof of compliance, proof of payment, completion of affidavit and payment of applicable fees related to the removal (Vehicle Code § 22651 et seq., Vehicle Code § 22652 et seq., Vehicle Code § 22850.3; Vehicle Code § 22850.5).
- (c) A vehicle removed pursuant to Vehicle Code § 14602.6(a) shall be released to the registered owner or his/her agent with proof of current registration, proof of a valid driver's license and applicable fees paid prior to the end of the 30-day impoundment period under any of the following circumstances:
  - 1. The vehicle was stolen.
  - 2. If the driver reinstates his/her driver's license or acquires a license and provides proof of proper insurance.
  - 3. Any other circumstance as set forth in Vehicle Code § 14602.6.
  - 4. When there is no remaining community caretaking need to continue impound of the vehicle or the continued impound would not otherwise comply with the Fourth Amendment.

Personnel whose duties include releasing towed vehicles should consult the Vehicle Code under which the vehicle was towed or impounded for any specific requirements prior to release.

Employees who suspect that a vehicle was impounded in error should promptly advise a supervisor. Supervisors should approve, when appropriate, the release of the vehicle without

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Vehicle Towing and Release*

---

requiring the registered owner or his/her agent to request a hearing, as described in the Vehicle Impound Hearings Policy.

## Vehicle Impound Hearings

### 512.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes a procedure for the requirement to provide vehicle storage or impound hearings pursuant to Vehicle Code § 22852.

### 512.2 STORED OR IMPOUND HEARING

When a vehicle is stored or impounded by any member of the Merced County Sheriff's Office, a hearing will be conducted upon the request of the registered or legal owner of the vehicle or his/her agent (Vehicle Code § 22650(a); Vehicle Code § 22852(a)).

The hearing shall be conducted within 48 hours of the request, excluding weekends and holidays. The hearing officer must be a person other than the person who directed the storage or impound of the vehicle (Vehicle Code § 22852(c)).

#### 512.2.1 HEARING PROCEDURES

The vehicle storage hearing is an informal process to evaluate the validity of an order to store or impound a vehicle. The employee who caused the storage or removal of the vehicle does not need to be present for this hearing.

All requests for a hearing on a stored or impounded vehicle shall be submitted in person, in writing or by telephone within 10 days of the date appearing on the notice (Vehicle Code § 22852(b)). The Area Lieutenant or designee will generally serve as the hearing officer. The person requesting the hearing may record the hearing at his/her own expense.

The failure of either the registered or legal owner or interested person or his/her agent to request a hearing in a timely manner or to attend a scheduled hearing shall be considered a waiver of and satisfaction of the post-storage hearing requirement (Vehicle Code § 22851.3(e)(2); Vehicle Code § 22852(d)).

Any relevant evidence may be submitted and reviewed by the hearing officer to determine if reasonable grounds have been established for the storage or impound of the vehicle. The initial burden of proof established by a preponderance of the evidence that the storage/impound was based on probable cause rests with the Department.

After consideration of all information, the hearing officer shall determine the validity of the storage or impound of the vehicle in question and then render a decision. The hearing officer shall also consider any mitigating circumstances attendant to the storage that reasonably would warrant the release of the vehicle or a modification or reduction of the period the vehicle is impounded (Vehicle Code § 14602.6(b); Vehicle Code § 14602.8(b)).

Aside from those mitigating circumstances enumerated in the Vehicle Code, the registered owner's lack of actual knowledge that the driver to whom the vehicle was loaned was not validly licensed may constitute a mitigating circumstance under Vehicle Code § 14602.6(b) or 14602.8(b), warranting release of the vehicle. This mitigating circumstance exception is not limited to situations

## *Vehicle Impound Hearings*

---

where the owner made a reasonable inquiry as to the licensed status of the driver before lending the vehicle.

The legislative intent and this department's policy is to prevent unlicensed driving pursuant to Vehicle Code §14602.6. If this purpose is not furthered by the continued impoundment of a vehicle, release is most often appropriate.

- (a) If a decision is made that reasonable grounds for storage or impound have been established, the hearing officer shall advise the inquiring party of the decision and that the inquiring party may pursue further civil remedies if desired.
  - 1. If mitigating circumstances are found to be relevant, the hearing officer shall make reasonable adjustments to the impound period, storage or assessment of fees as warranted.
- (b) If a decision is made that reasonable grounds for storage or impound have not been established or sufficient mitigating circumstances exist, the vehicle in storage shall be released immediately. Towing and storage fees will be paid at the Department's expense (Vehicle Code § 22852(e)).
- (c) If a decision is made that reasonable grounds for storage have not been established or sufficient mitigating circumstances exist, and the vehicle has been released with fees having been paid, the receipt for such fees will be forwarded with a letter to the appropriate Area Lieutenant. The hearing officer will recommend to the appropriate Area Lieutenant that the fees paid by the registered or legal owner of the vehicle in question or their agent be reimbursed by the Department.

# Traffic Citations

## 516.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy outlines the responsibility for traffic citations, the procedure for dismissal, correction, and voiding of traffic citations.

## 516.2 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Administrative Manager shall be responsible for the development and design of all Department traffic citations in compliance with state law and the Judicial Council.

The Records Division shall be responsible for the supply and accounting of all traffic citations issued to employees of this department.

## 516.3 DISMISSAL OF TRAFFIC CITATIONS

Employees of this department do not have the authority to dismiss a citation once it has been issued. Only the court has the authority to dismiss a citation that has been issued (Vehicle Code § 40500(d)). Any request from a recipient to dismiss a citation shall be referred to a supervisor. Upon a review of the circumstances involving the issuance of the traffic citation, the supervisor may request the Operations Captain to recommend dismissal of the traffic citation. If approved, the citation will be forwarded to the appropriate court with a request for dismissal. All recipients of traffic citations whose request for the dismissal of a traffic citation has been denied shall be referred to the appropriate court.

Should a deputy determine during a court proceeding that a traffic citation should be dismissed in the interest of justice or where prosecution is deemed inappropriate the deputy may request the court to dismiss the citation. Upon dismissal of the traffic citation by the court, the deputy shall notify his/her immediate supervisor of the circumstances surrounding the dismissal and shall complete any paperwork as directed or required. The citation dismissal shall then be forwarded to the Operations Captain for review.

## 516.4 VOIDING TRAFFIC CITATIONS

Voiding a traffic citation may occur when a traffic citation has not been completed or where it is completed, but not issued. All copies of the citation shall be presented to a supervisor to approve the voiding of the citation. The citation and copies shall then be forwarded to the Records Division.

## 516.5 CORRECTION OF TRAFFIC CITATIONS

When a traffic citation is issued and in need of correction, the deputy issuing the citation shall submit the citation and a letter requesting a specific correction to his/her immediate supervisor. The citation and letter shall then be forwarded to the Records Division. The Records Division shall prepare a letter of correction to the court having jurisdiction and to the recipient of the citation.

## *Traffic Citations*

---

### **516.6 DISPOSITION OF TRAFFIC CITATIONS**

The court and file copies of all traffic citations issued by members of this department shall be forwarded to the employee's immediate supervisor for review. The citation copies shall then be filed with the Records Division.

Upon separation from employment with the this department, all employees issued traffic citations books shall return any unused citations to the Records Division.

### **516.7 NOTICE OF PARKING VIOLATION APPEAL PROCEDURE**

Disposition of notice of parking violation appeals is conducted pursuant to Vehicle Code § 40215.

#### **516.7.1 APPEAL STAGES**

Appeals may be pursued sequentially at three different levels:

- (a) Administrative reviews are conducted by the Records Division who will review written/documentary data. Based on the data, an Operations Supervisor may either sustain or dismiss the violation. Requests for administrative reviews are available at the front desk or Records Division of the Merced County Sheriff's Office. These requests are informal written statements outlining why the notice of parking violation should be dismissed. Copies of documentation relating to the notice of parking violation and the request for dismissal must be mailed to the current mailing address of the processing agency.
- (b) If the appellant wishes to pursue the matter beyond administrative review, an administrative hearing may be conducted in person or by written application, at the election of the appellant. Independent referees review the existent administrative file, amendments, and/or testimonial material provided by the appellant and may conduct further investigation or follow-up on their own.
- (c) If the appellant wishes to pursue the matter beyond an administrative hearing, a Superior Court review may be presented in person by the appellant after an application for review and designated filing fees have been paid to The Superior Court of California.

#### **516.7.2 TIME REQUIREMENTS**

Administrative review or appearance before a hearing examiner will not be provided if the mandated time limits are not adhered to by the violator.

- (a) Requests for an administrative review must be postmarked within 21 calendar days of issuance of the notice of parking violation, or within 14 calendar days of the mailing of the Notice of Delinquent Parking (Violation Vehicle Code § 40215(a)).
- (b) Requests for administrative hearings must be made no later than 21 calendar days following the notification mailing of the results of the administrative review (Vehicle Code § 40215(b)).

## *Traffic Citations*

---

- (c) An administrative hearing shall be held within 90 calendar days following the receipt of a request for an administrative hearing, excluding time tolled pursuant to Vehicle Code § 40200 - 40225. The person requesting the hearing may request one continuance, not to exceed 21 calendar days (Vehicle Code § 40215).
- (d) Registered owners of vehicles may transfer responsibility for the violation via timely affidavit of non-liability when the vehicle has been transferred, rented or under certain other circumstances (Vehicle Code § 40209 and Vehicle Code § 40210).

### **516.7.3 COSTS**

- (a) There is no cost for an administrative review.
- (b) Appellants must pay the full amount due for the citation, or provide satisfactory proof of their inability to pay, before receiving an administrative hearing.
- (c) An appeal through Superior Court requires prior payment of filing costs including applicable court charges and fees. These costs will be reimbursed to the appellant in addition to any previously paid fines if appellant's liability is overruled by the Superior Court.

### **516.8 JUVENILE CITATIONS**

Completion of traffic citation forms for juveniles may vary slightly from the procedure for adults. The juvenile's age, place of residency, and the type of offense should be considered before issuing the juvenile a citation.

## Disabled Vehicles

### 520.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Vehicle Code § 20018 provides that all law enforcement agencies having responsibility for traffic enforcement may develop and adopt a written policy to provide assistance to motorists in disabled vehicles within their primary jurisdiction.

### 520.2 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY

When an on-duty deputy observes a disabled vehicle on the roadway, the deputy should make a reasonable effort to provide assistance. If that deputy is assigned to a call of higher priority, the dispatcher should be advised of the location of the disabled vehicle and the need for assistance. The dispatcher should then assign another available deputy to respond for assistance as soon as practical.

### 520.3 EXTENT OF ASSISTANCE

In most cases, a disabled motorist will require assistance. After arrangements for assistance are made, continued involvement by department personnel will be contingent on the time of day, the location, the availability of departmental resources, and the vulnerability of the disabled motorist.

#### 520.3.1 MECHANICAL REPAIRS

Department personnel shall not make mechanical repairs to a disabled vehicle. The use of push bumpers to relocate vehicles to a position of safety is not considered a mechanical repair.

#### 520.3.2 RELOCATION OF DISABLED VEHICLES

The relocation of disabled vehicles by members of this department by pushing or pulling a vehicle should only occur when the conditions reasonably indicate that immediate movement is necessary to reduce a hazard presented by the disabled vehicle.

#### 520.3.3 RELOCATION OF DISABLED MOTORIST

The relocation of a disabled motorist should only occur with the person's consent and should be suggested when conditions reasonably indicate that immediate movement is necessary to mitigate a potential hazard. The department member may stay with the disabled motorist or transport him/her to a safe area to await pickup.

### 520.4 PUBLIC ACCESS TO THIS POLICY

This written policy is available upon request.

## 72-Hour Parking Violations

### 524.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides procedures for the marking, recording, and storage of vehicles parked in violation of the Merced County Sheriff's Department County Ordinance regulating 72-hour parking violations and abandoned vehicles under the authority of Vehicle Code § 22669.

### 524.2 MARKING VEHICLES

Vehicles suspected of being in violation of the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department 72-Hour Parking Ordinance shall be marked and noted on the Merced County Sheriff's Office Marked Vehicle Card. No case number is required at this time.

A visible chalk mark should be placed on the left rear tire tread at the fender level unless missing tires or other vehicle conditions prevent marking. Any deviation in markings shall be noted on the Marked Vehicle Card. The investigating employee should make a good faith effort to notify the owner of any vehicle subject to towing prior to having the vehicle removed. This may be accomplished by personal contact, telephone or by leaving notice attached to the vehicle at least 24 hours prior to removal.

All Marked Vehicle Cards shall be submitted to the Records Division for computer data entry.

If a marked vehicle has been moved or the markings have been removed during a 72-hour investigation period, the vehicle shall be marked again for the 72-hour parking violation and a Marked Vehicle Card completed and forwarded to the Records Division.

Parking citations for the 72-hour parking ordinance shall not be issued when the vehicle is stored for the 72-hour parking violation.

#### 524.2.1 MARKED VEHICLE FILE

The Records Division shall be responsible for maintaining a file for all Marked Vehicle Cards.

Patrol Division shall be responsible for the follow up investigation of all 72-hour parking violations noted on the Marked Vehicle Cards.

#### 524.2.2 VEHICLE STORAGE

Any vehicle in violation shall be stored by the authorized towing service and a vehicle storage report shall be completed by the deputy authorizing the storage of the vehicle.

The storage report form shall be submitted to the Records Division immediately following the storage of the vehicle. It shall be the responsibility of the Records Division to immediately notify the Stolen Vehicle System (SVS) of the Department of Justice in Sacramento ( Vehicle Code § 22851.3(b)). Notification may also be made to the National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS)(Vehicle Code § 22854.5).

Within 48 hours of the storage of any such vehicle, excluding weekends and holidays, it shall be the responsibility of the Records Division to determine the names and addresses of any individuals

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *72-Hour Parking Violations*

---

having an interest in the vehicle through DMV or CLETS computers. Notice to all such individuals shall be sent first-class or certified mail pursuant to Vehicle Code § 22851.3(d).

## **Chapter 6 - Investigation Operations**

# Investigation and Prosecution

## 600.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to set guidelines and requirements pertaining to the handling and disposition of criminal investigations.

## 600.2 POTENTIALLY EXCULPATORY EVIDENCE OR FACTS

Deputies must include in their reports adequate reference to all material evidence and facts which are reasonably believed to be exculpatory to any individual in the case. If a deputy learns of potentially exculpatory information any time after submission of the case, the deputy must notify the prosecutor as soon as practicable.

Evidence or facts are considered material if there is a reasonable probability that they may impact the result of a criminal proceeding or trial. Determining whether evidence or facts are material often requires legal or even judicial review. If a deputy is unsure whether evidence or facts are material, the deputy should address the issue with a supervisor.

Supervisors uncertain about whether evidence or facts are material should address the issue in a written memo to an appropriate prosecutor. A copy of the memo should be retained in the department case file.

## 600.3 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to investigate crimes thoroughly and with due diligence, and to evaluate and prepare criminal cases for appropriate clearance or submission to a prosecutor.

## 600.4 INITIAL INVESTIGATION

### 600.4.1 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

A deputy responsible for an initial investigation shall complete no less than the following:

- (a) Make a preliminary determination of whether a crime has been committed by completing, at a minimum:
  - 1. An initial statement from any witnesses or complainants.
  - 2. A cursory examination for evidence.
- (b) If information indicates a crime has occurred, the deputy shall:
  - 1. Preserve the scene and any evidence as required to complete the initial and follow-up investigation.
  - 2. Determine if additional investigative resources (e.g., investigators or scene processing) are necessary and request assistance as required.
  - 3. If assistance is warranted, or if the incident is not routine, notify a supervisor or the Patrol Lieutenant.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Investigation and Prosecution*

---

4. Make reasonable attempts to locate, identify and interview all available victims, complainants, witnesses and suspects.
  5. Collect any evidence.
  6. Take any appropriate law enforcement action.
  7. Complete and submit the appropriate reports and documentation.
- (c) If the preliminary determination is that no crime occurred, determine what other action may be necessary, what other resources may be available, and advise the informant or complainant of this information.

#### **600.4.2 CIVILIAN MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES**

A civilian member should not be assigned to any preliminary criminal investigation. However, civilian staff may be assigned to investigate an administrative complaint if appropriate based on the circumstances. Civilian staff will not investigate any cases involving Deputy Sheriff/Coroners, Deputy Coroners, and Sheriff Dispatchers.

#### **600.5 CUSTODIAL INTERROGATION REQUIREMENTS**

Suspects who are in custody and subjected to an interrogation shall be given the *Miranda* warning, unless an exception applies. Interview or interrogation of a juvenile shall be in accordance with the Temporary Custody of Juveniles Policy.

##### **600.5.1 AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDINGS**

Any custodial interrogation of an individual who is suspected of having committed any felony offense should be recorded (audio or video with audio as available) in its entirety. Regardless of where the interrogation occurs, every reasonable effort should be made to secure functional recording equipment to accomplish such recordings.

Consideration should also be given to recording a custodial interrogation, or any investigative interview, for any other offense when it is reasonable to believe it would be appropriate and beneficial to the investigation and is otherwise allowed by law.

No recording of a custodial interrogation should be destroyed or altered without written authorization from the prosecuting attorney and the Detective Unit supervisor. Copies of recorded interrogations or interviews may be made in the same or a different format as the original recording, provided the copies are true, accurate and complete and are made only for authorized and legitimate law enforcement purposes.

Recordings should not take the place of a thorough report and investigative interviews. Written statements from suspects should continue to be obtained when applicable.

##### **600.5.2 MANDATORY RECORDING OF ADULTS**

Any custodial interrogation of an adult who is suspected of having committed any murder shall be recorded in its entirety. The recording should be video with audio if reasonably feasible (Penal Code § 859.5).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Investigation and Prosecution*

---

This recording is not mandatory when (Penal Code § 859.5):

- (a) Recording is not feasible because of exigent circumstances that are later documented in a report.
- (b) The suspect refuses to have the interrogation recorded, including a refusal any time during the interrogation, and the refusal is documented in a report. If feasible, the refusal shall be electronically recorded.
- (c) The custodial interrogation occurred in another state by law enforcement officers of that state, unless the interrogation was conducted with the intent to avoid the requirements of Penal Code § 859.5.
- (d) The interrogation occurs when no member conducting the interrogation has a reason to believe that the individual may have committed murder. Continued custodial interrogation concerning that offense shall be electronically recorded if the interrogating member develops a reason to believe the individual committed murder.
- (e) The interrogation would disclose the identity of a confidential informant or would jeopardize the safety of a deputy, the individual being interrogated or another individual. Such circumstances shall be documented in a report.
- (f) A recording device fails despite reasonable maintenance and the timely repair or replacement is not feasible.
- (g) The questions are part of a routine processing or booking, and are not an interrogation.
- (h) The suspect is in custody for murder and the interrogation is unrelated to a murder. However, if any information concerning a murder is mentioned during the interrogation, the remainder of the interrogation shall be recorded.

The Department shall maintain an original or an exact copy of the recording until a conviction relating to the interrogation is final and all appeals are exhausted or prosecution is barred by law (Penal Code § 859.5).

#### **600.6 DISCONTINUATION OF INVESTIGATIONS**

The investigation of a criminal case or efforts to seek prosecution should only be discontinued if one of the following applies:

- (a) All reasonable investigative efforts have been exhausted, no reasonable belief that the person who committed the crime can be identified, and the incident has been documented appropriately.
- (b) The perpetrator of a misdemeanor has been identified and a warning is the most appropriate disposition.
  - 1. In these cases, the investigator shall document that the person was warned and why prosecution was not sought.
  - 2. Warnings shall not be given for felony offenses or other offenses identified in this policy or by law that require an arrest or submission of a case to a prosecutor.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Investigation and Prosecution*

---

- (c) The case has been submitted to the appropriate prosecutor but no charges have been filed. Further investigation is not reasonable nor has the prosecutor requested further investigation.
- (d) The case has been submitted to the appropriate prosecutor, charges have been filed, and further investigation is not reasonable, warranted or requested, and there is no need to take the suspect into custody.
- (e) Suspects have been arrested, there are no other suspects, and further investigation is either not warranted or requested.
- (f) Investigation has proven that a crime was not committed (see the Sexual Assault Investigations Policy for special considerations in these cases).

The Domestic Violence, Child Abuse Sexual Assault Investigations and Adult Abuse policies may also require an arrest or submittal of a case to a prosecutor.

#### **600.7 COMPUTERS AND DIGITAL EVIDENCE**

The collection, preservation, transportation and storage of computers, cell phones and other digital devices may require specialized handling to preserve the value of the related evidence. If it is anticipated that computers or similar equipment will be seized, deputies should request that computer forensic examiners assist with seizing computers and related evidence. If a forensic examiner is unavailable, deputies should take reasonable steps to prepare for such seizure and use the resources that are available.

#### **600.8 INVESTIGATIVE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND INTERNET SOURCES**

Use of social media and any other Internet source to access information for the purpose of criminal investigation shall comply with applicable laws and policies regarding privacy, civil rights and civil liberties. Information gathered via the Internet should only be accessed by members while on-duty and for purposes related to the mission of this department. If a member encounters information relevant to a criminal investigation while off-duty or while using his/her own equipment, the member should note the dates, times and locations of the information and report the discovery to his/her supervisor as soon as practicable. The member, or others who have been assigned to do so, should attempt to replicate the finding when on-duty and using department equipment. Information obtained via the Internet should not be archived or stored in any manner other than department-established record keeping systems (see the Records Maintenance and Release and the Criminal Organizations policies).

##### **600.8.1 ACCESS RESTRICTIONS**

Information that can be accessed from any department computer, without the need of an account, password, email address, alias or other identifier (unrestricted websites), may be accessed and used for legitimate investigative purposes without supervisory approval.

Accessing information from any Internet source that requires the use or creation of an account, password, email address, alias or other identifier, or the use of nongovernment IP addresses, requires supervisor approval prior to access. The supervisor will review the justification for

## *Investigation and Prosecution*

---

accessing the information and consult with legal counsel as necessary to identify any policy or legal restrictions. Any such access and the supervisor approval shall be documented in the related investigative report.

Accessing information that requires the use of a third party's account or online identifier requires supervisor approval and the consent of the third party. The consent must be voluntary and shall be documented in the related investigative report.

Information gathered from any Internet source should be evaluated for its validity, authenticity, accuracy and reliability. Corroborative evidence should be sought and documented in the related investigative report.

Any information collected in furtherance of an investigation through an Internet source should be documented in the related report. Documentation should include the source of information and the dates and times that the information was gathered.

### **600.8.2 INTERCEPTING ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION**

Intercepting social media communications in real time may be subject to federal and state wiretap laws. Deputies should seek legal counsel before any such interception.

### **600.9 CELLULAR COMMUNICATIONS INTERCEPTION TECHNOLOGY**

The Detective Sergeant is responsible for ensuring the following for cellular communications interception technology operations (Government Code § 53166):

- (a) Security procedures are developed to protect information gathered through the use of the technology.
- (b) A usage and privacy policy is developed that includes:
  - 1. The purposes for which using cellular communications interception technology and collecting information is authorized.
  - 2. Identification by job title or other designation of employees who are authorized to use or access information collected through the use of cellular communications interception technology.
  - 3. Training requirements necessary for those authorized employees.
  - 4. A description of how the Department will monitor the use of its cellular communications interception technology to ensure the accuracy of the information collected and compliance with all applicable laws.
  - 5. Process and time period system audits.
  - 6. Identification of the existence of any memorandum of understanding or other agreement with any other local agency or other party for the shared use of cellular communications interception technology or the sharing of information collected through its use, including the identity of signatory parties.
  - 7. The purpose of, process for and restrictions on the sharing of information gathered through the use of cellular communications interception technology with other local agencies and persons.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Investigation and Prosecution*

---

8. The length of time information gathered through the use of cellular communications interception technology will be retained, and the process the local agency will utilize to determine if and when to destroy retained information.

Members shall only use approved devices and usage shall be in compliance with department security procedures, the department's usage and privacy procedures and all applicable laws.

#### **600.10 MULTI-AGENCY INTERCEPTION OPERATIONS**

Cellular communications interception technology operations will be governed by the lead investigative agency who will be responsible for administrative procedures as described in policy section 600.9.

# Sexual Assault Investigations

## 602.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the investigation of sexual assaults. These guidelines will address some of the unique aspects of such cases and the effects that these crimes have on the victims.

Mandatory notifications requirements are addressed in the Child Abuse and Adult Abuse policies.

### 602.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Sexual assault** - Any crime or attempted crime of a sexual nature, to include, but not limited to, offenses defined in Penal Code § 243.4, Penal Code § 261 et seq., and Penal Code § 285 et seq.

**Sexual Assault Response Team (SART)** - A multidisciplinary team generally comprised of advocates; law enforcement officers; forensic medical examiners, including sexual assault forensic examiners (SAFEs) or sexual assault nurse examiners (SANEs) if possible; forensic laboratory personnel; and prosecutors. The team is designed to coordinate a broad response to sexual assault victims.

## 602.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that its members, when responding to reports of sexual assaults, will strive to minimize the trauma experienced by the victims, and will aggressively investigate sexual assaults, pursue expeditious apprehension and conviction of perpetrators, and protect the safety of the victims and the community.

## 602.3 QUALIFIED INVESTIGATORS

Qualified investigators should be available for assignment of sexual assault investigations. These investigators should:

- (a) Have specialized training in, and be familiar with, interview techniques and the medical and legal issues that are specific to sexual assault investigations.
- (b) Conduct follow-up interviews and investigation.
- (c) Present appropriate cases of alleged sexual assault to the prosecutor for review.
- (d) Coordinate with other enforcement agencies, social service agencies and medical personnel as needed.
- (e) Provide referrals to therapy services, victim advocates and support for the victim.
- (f) Participate in or coordinate with SART.

## *Sexual Assault Investigations*

---

### **602.4 INVESTIGATION AND REPORTING**

In all reported or suspected cases of sexual assault, a report should be written and assigned for follow-up investigation. This includes incidents in which the allegations appear unfounded or unsubstantiated.

#### **602.4.1 VICTIM INTERVIEWS**

The primary considerations in sexual assault investigations, which begin with the initial call to Dispatch, should be the health and safety of the victim, the preservation of evidence, and preliminary interviews to determine if a crime has been committed and to attempt to identify the suspect.

Whenever possible, a member of SART should be included in the initial victim interviews. An in-depth follow-up interview should not be conducted until after the medical and forensic examinations are completed and the personal needs of the victim have been met (e.g., change of clothes, bathing). The follow-up interview may be delayed to the following day based upon the circumstances. Whenever practicable, the follow-up interview should be conducted by a qualified investigator.

Victims are often reluctant or embarrassed to discuss details. Recanting or changing one or more aspects of a prior statement is not necessarily an indication of false reporting or that the case is unfounded. If the responding deputy has reason to believe the incident may be without merit, he/she should document the evidence and inconsistencies. Due to physical and emotional trauma, and the myths and stereotypes associated with sexual assault, inconsistencies in the victim's report are not uncommon. No opinions of whether the case is unfounded shall be included in the report.

Victims shall not be asked or required to take a polygraph examination (42 USC § 3796gg-8; Penal Code § 637.4).

#### **602.4.2 VICTIM RIGHTS**

Victims should be apprised of applicable victim's rights provisions, as outlined in the Victim and Witness Assistance Policy.

Whenever there is an alleged sexual assault the assigned deputy shall accomplish the following:

- (a) Immediately provide the victim with the "Victims of Domestic Violence" card containing the names and locations of rape victim counseling centers within the county and their 24-hour counseling service telephone numbers (Penal Code § 264.2(a)).
- (b) Advise the victim of the right to have a victim advocate and a support person present at any interview by law enforcement as provided in Penal Code § 679.04.
- (c) If the victim is transported to a hospital for any medical evidentiary or physical examination, the deputy shall immediately cause the local rape victim counseling center to be notified (Penal Code § 264.2(b)(1)).
  1. Prior to any such examination the assigned deputy shall ensure that the victim has been properly informed of his/her right to have a sexual assault victim

## *Sexual Assault Investigations*

---

counselor and at least one other support person present (Penal Code § 264.2(b)(2)).

2. A support person may be excluded from the examination by the deputy or the medical provider if his/her presence would be detrimental to the purpose of the examination (Penal Code § 264.2(b)(4)).

### 602.4.3 VICTIM CONFIDENTIALITY

Deputies investigating or receiving a report of an alleged sex offense shall inform the victim, or the victim's parent or guardian if the victim is a minor, that his/her name will become a matter of public record unless the victim requests that his/her name not be made public. The reporting deputy shall document in his/her report that the victim was properly informed and shall include any related response made by the victim, or if a minor, any response made by the victim's parent or guardian (Penal Code § 293).

Except as authorized by law, members of this department shall not publicly disclose the name of any victim of a sex crime who has exercised his/her right to confidentiality (Penal Code § 293).

### 602.4.4 COLLECTION AND TESTING OF BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

Whenever possible, a SART member should be involved in the collection of forensic evidence from the victim.

When the facts of the case indicate that collection of biological evidence is warranted, it should be collected regardless of how much time has elapsed since the reported assault.

If a drug-facilitated sexual assault is suspected, it is critical to the investigation that a urine sample from the victim be collected by a medical professional.

Subject to available resources and other law enforcement considerations which may affect the ability to process and analyze rape kits, other sexual assault victim evidence and other crime scene evidence, any member of this department assigned to investigate a sexual assault offense should take every reasonable step to ensure that DNA testing of such evidence is performed in a timely manner and within the time periods prescribed by Penal Code § 803(g). Generally, rape kits should be submitted to the crime lab within 20 days after being booked into evidence (Penal Code § 680).

In order to maximize the effectiveness of such testing and identify the perpetrator of any sexual assault, the assigned deputy should further ensure that the results of any such test have been timely entered into and checked against both the Department of Justice Cal-DNA database and the Combined DNA Index System (CODIS).

If, for any reason, DNA evidence in a sexual assault case in which the identity of the perpetrator is in issue and is not going to be analyzed within 18 months of the crime, the assigned deputy shall notify the victim of such fact in writing no less than 60 days prior to the expiration of the 18 month period (Penal Code § 680(d)).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Sexual Assault Investigations*

---

#### 602.4.5 VICTIM NOTIFICATION OF DNA STATUS

- (a) Upon receipt of a written request from a sexual assault victim or the victim's authorized designee, the assigned deputy may inform the victim of the status of the DNA testing of any evidence from the victim's case (Penal Code § 680).
  - 1. Although such information may be communicated orally, the assigned deputy should thereafter follow-up with and retain a copy of confirmation by either written or electronic mail.
  - 2. Absent a written request, no member of this department is required to, but may, communicate with the victim or the victim's authorized designee regarding the status of any DNA testing.
- (b) Subject to the commitment of sufficient resources to respond to requests for information, sexual assault victims shall further have the following rights (Penal Code § 680):
  - 1. To be informed if a DNA profile of the assailant was obtained from the testing of the rape kit or other crime scene evidence from their case.
  - 2. To be informed if there is a match between the DNA profile of the assailant developed from the evidence and a DNA profile contained in the Department of Justice Convicted Offender DNA Database, providing that disclosure would not impede or compromise an ongoing investigation.
  - 3. To be informed if the DNA profile of the assailant developed from the evidence has been entered into the Department of Justice Databank of case evidence.
- (c) Provided that the sexual assault victim or the victim's authorized designee has kept the assigned deputy informed with regard to current address, telephone number and email address (if available), any victim or the victim's authorized designee shall, upon request, be advised of any known significant changes regarding the victim's case (Penal Code § 680).
  - 1. Although such information may be communicated orally, the assigned deputy should thereafter follow-up with and retain a copy of confirmation by either written or electronic mail.
  - 2. No deputy shall be required or expected to release any information which might impede or compromise any ongoing investigation.

#### 602.4.6 DESTRUCTION OF EVIDENCE

Any destruction of evidence related to a sexual assault shall occur only after victim notification is made as required pursuant to Penal Code § 680 and only in compliance with the Property and Evidence Policy.

#### 602.4.7 DISPOSITION OF CASES

If the assigned investigator has reason to believe the case is without merit, the case may be classified as unfounded only upon review and approval of the Detective Unit supervisor.

## *Sexual Assault Investigations*

---

Classification of a rape case as unfounded requires the Detective Unit supervisor to determine that the facts have significant irregularities with reported information and that the incident could not have happened as it was reported. When a victim has recanted his/her original statement, there must be corroborating evidence to support the recanted information before the case should be determined as unfounded.

### **602.4.8 AUDITING CASE DISPOSITIONS**

Upon direction from the Sheriff, the Detective Unit supervisor may review case dispositions. The Detective Unit supervisor may elect to involve SART and/or victim advocates if deemed appropriate.

### **602.5 RELEASING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC**

In cases where the perpetrator is not known to the victim, and especially if there are multiple crimes where more than one appear to be related, consideration should be given to releasing information to the public whenever there is a reasonable likelihood that doing so may result in developing helpful investigative leads. The Detective Unit supervisor should weigh the risk of alerting the suspect to the investigation with the need to protect the victim and the public, and to prevent more crimes.

### **602.6 TRAINING**

Subject to available resources, periodic training will be provided to:

- (a) Members who are first responders. Training should include:
  - 1. Initial response to sexual assaults.
  - 2. Legal issues.
  - 3. Victim advocacy.
  - 4. Victim's response to trauma.
- (b) Qualified investigators who should receive advanced training on additional topics. Advanced training should include:
  - 1. Interviewing sexual assault victims.
  - 2. SART.
  - 3. Medical and legal aspects of sexual assault investigations.
  - 4. Serial crimes investigations.
  - 5. Use of community and other federal and state investigative resources, such as the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (ViCAP).
  - 6. Techniques for communicating with victims to minimize trauma.

## Asset Forfeiture

### 606.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy describes the authority and procedure for the seizure, forfeiture and liquidation of property associated with designated offenses.

#### 606.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Fiscal agent** - The person designated by the Sheriff to be responsible for securing and maintaining seized assets and distributing any proceeds realized from any forfeiture proceedings. This includes any time the Merced County Sheriff's Office seizes property for forfeiture or when the Merced County Sheriff's Office is acting as the fiscal agent pursuant to a multi-agency agreement.

**Forfeiture** - The process by which legal ownership of an asset is transferred to a government or other authority.

**Forfeiture reviewer** - The department member assigned by the Sheriff who is responsible for reviewing all forfeiture cases and for acting as the liaison between the Department and the assigned attorney.

**Property subject to forfeiture** - The following may be subject to forfeiture:

- (a) Property related to a narcotics offense, which includes (Heath and Safety Code § 11470; Health and Safety Code § 11470.1):
  - 1. Property (not including real property or vehicles) used, or intended for use, as a container for controlled substances, materials to manufacture controlled substances, etc.
  - 2. Interest in a vehicle (car, boat, airplane, other vehicle) used to facilitate the manufacture, possession for sale or sale of specified quantities of controlled substances.
  - 3. Money, negotiable instruments, securities or other things of value furnished or intended to be furnished by any person in exchange for a controlled substance, proceeds traceable to an exchange, etc.
  - 4. Real property when the owner is convicted of violating Health and Safety Code § 11366, Health and Safety Code § 11366.5 or Health and Safety Code § 11366.6 (drug houses) when the property was not used as a family residence or for other lawful purposes, or property owned by two or more persons, one of whom had no knowledge of its unlawful use.
  - 5. The expenses of seizing, eradicating, destroying or taking remedial action with respect to any controlled substance or its precursors upon conviction for the unlawful manufacture or cultivation of any controlled substance or its precursors.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Asset Forfeiture

---

- (b) Property related to criminal profiteering (may include gang crimes), to include (Penal Code § 186.2; Penal Code § 186.3):
  - 1. Any property interest, whether tangible or intangible, acquired through a pattern of criminal profiteering activity.
  - 2. All proceeds acquired through a pattern of criminal profiteering activity, including all things of value that may have been received in exchange for the proceeds immediately derived from the pattern of criminal profiteering activity.

**Seizure** - The act of law enforcement officials taking property, cash or assets that have been used in connection with or acquired by specified illegal activities.

#### 606.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes that appropriately applied forfeiture laws are helpful to enforce the law, deter crime and reduce the economic incentive of crime. However, the potential for revenue should never compromise the effective investigation of criminal offenses, officer safety or any person's due process rights.

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that all members, including those assigned to internal or external law enforcement task force operations, shall comply with all state and federal laws pertaining to forfeiture.

##### 606.2.1 FEDERAL ASSET FORFEITURE

Seized assets are also subject to federal forfeiture laws. Procedures for federal asset forfeiture are available to investigative personnel who must be contacted prior to initiating any federal forfeiture proceeding.

#### 606.3 ASSET SEIZURE

Property may be seized for forfeiture as provided in this policy.

##### 606.3.1 PROPERTY SUBJECT TO SEIZURE

The following may be seized upon review and approval of a supervisor and in coordination with the forfeiture reviewer:

- (a) Property subject to forfeiture authorized for seizure under the authority of a search warrant or court order.
- (b) Property subject to forfeiture not authorized for seizure under the authority of a search warrant or court order when any of the following apply (Health and Safety Code § 11471; Health and Safety Code § 11488):
  - 1. The property subject to forfeiture is legally seized incident to an arrest.
  - 2. There is probable cause to believe that the property was used or is intended to be used in a violation of the Uniform Controlled Substances Act and the seizing deputy can articulate a nexus between the property and the controlled substance offense that would lead to the item being property subject for forfeiture.

## *Asset Forfeiture*

---

Deputies aware of assets that may be forfeitable as a result of criminal profiteering or human trafficking should consider contacting the district attorney regarding a court order to protect the assets (Penal Code § 186.6; Penal Code § 236.6).

Whenever practicable, a search warrant or court order for seizure prior to making a seizure is the preferred method.

A large amount of money standing alone is insufficient to establish the probable cause required to make a seizure.

### **606.3.2 PROPERTY NOT SUBJECT TO SEIZURE**

The following property should not be seized for forfeiture:

- (a) Cash and property that does not meet the forfeiture counsel's current minimum forfeiture thresholds should not be seized.
- (b) Real property is not subject to seizure, absent exigent circumstances, without a court order (Health and Safety Code § 11471).
- (c) A vehicle which may be lawfully driven on the highway if there is a community property interest in the vehicle by a person other than the suspect and the vehicle is the sole vehicle available to the suspect's immediate family (Health and Safety Code § 11470).
- (d) Vehicles, boats or airplanes owned by an "innocent owner," such as a common carrier with no knowledge of the suspected offense (Health and Safety Code § 11490).
- (e) Any property when the associated activity involves the possession of marijuana or related paraphernalia that is permissible under the Control, Regulate and Tax Adult Use of Marijuana Act (Health and Safety Code § 11362.1).

### **606.3.3 SEIZED VEHICLES**

Vehicles seized subject to forfeiture will be taken to a designated secure storage facility. A seized vehicle should not be impounded. The deputy seizing the vehicle shall notify the detective supervisor of the seizure of the vehicle and circumstances of the seizure as soon as possible.

If the vehicle cannot be driven, a tow truck will be used to tow the vehicle to the storage facility.

Personal property located in a seized vehicle shall be removed and booked into Property as either evidence or for safekeeping.

### **606.4 PROCESSING SEIZED PROPERTY FOR FORFEITURE PROCEEDINGS**

When property or cash subject to this policy is seized, the deputy making the seizure should ensure compliance with the following:

- (a) Complete applicable seizure forms and present the appropriate copy to the person from whom the property is seized. If cash or property is seized from more than one person, a separate copy must be provided to each person, specifying the items seized. When property is seized and no one claims an interest in the property, the deputy must leave the copy in the place where the property was found, if it is reasonable to do so.

## *Asset Forfeiture*

---

- (b) Complete and submit a report and original seizure forms within 24 hours of the seizure, if practicable.
- (c) Forward the original seizure forms and related reports to the forfeiture reviewer within two days of seizure.

The deputy will book seized property as evidence with the notation in the comment section of the property form, "Seized Subject to Forfeiture." Property seized subject to forfeiture should be booked on a separate property form. No other evidence from the case should be booked on this form.

Photographs should be taken of items seized, particularly cash, jewelry and other valuable items.

Deputies who suspect property may be subject to seizure but are not able to seize the property (e.g., the property is located elsewhere, the whereabouts of the property is unknown, it is real estate, bank accounts, non-tangible assets) should document and forward the information in the appropriate report to the forfeiture reviewer.

### **606.5 MAINTAINING SEIZED PROPERTY**

The Evidence Room Supervisor is responsible for ensuring compliance with the following:

- (a) All property received for forfeiture is reasonably secured and properly stored to prevent waste and preserve its condition.
- (b) All property received for forfeiture is checked to determine if the property has been stolen.
- (c) All property received for forfeiture is retained in the same manner as evidence until forfeiture is finalized or the property is returned to the claimant or the person with an ownership interest.
- (d) Property received for forfeiture is not used unless the forfeiture action has been completed.

### **606.6 FORFEITURE REVIEWER**

The Sheriff will appoint a deputy as the forfeiture reviewer. Prior to assuming duties, or as soon as practicable thereafter, the forfeiture reviewer should attend a department-approved course on asset forfeiture.

The responsibilities of the forfeiture reviewer include:

- (a) Remaining familiar with forfeiture laws, particularly Health and Safety Code § 11469 et seq. and Penal Code § 186.2 et seq. and the forfeiture policies of the forfeiture counsel.
- (b) Serving as the liaison between the Department and the forfeiture counsel and ensuring prompt legal review of all seizures.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Asset Forfeiture*

---

- (c) Making reasonable efforts to obtain annual training that includes best practices in pursuing, seizing and tracking forfeitures.
- (d) Ensuring that property seized under state law is not referred or otherwise transferred to a federal agency seeking the property for federal forfeiture as prohibited by Health and Safety Code § 11471.2.
- (e) Ensuring that responsibilities, including the designation of a fiscal agent, are clearly established whenever multiple agencies are cooperating in a forfeiture case.
- (f) Ensuring that seizure forms are available and appropriate for department use. These should include notice forms, a receipt form and a checklist that provides relevant guidance to deputies. The forms should be available in languages appropriate for the region and should contain spaces for:
  - 1. Names and contact information for all relevant persons and law enforcement officers involved.
  - 2. Information as to how ownership or other property interests may have been determined (e.g., verbal claims of ownership, titles, public records).
  - 3. A space for the signature of the person from whom cash or property is being seized.
  - 4. A tear-off portion or copy, which should be given to the person from whom cash or property is being seized, that includes the legal authority for the seizure, information regarding the process to contest the seizure and a detailed description of the items seized.
- (g) Ensuring that deputies who may be involved in asset forfeiture receive training in the proper use of the seizure forms and the forfeiture process. The training should be developed in consultation with the appropriate legal counsel and may be accomplished through traditional classroom education, electronic media, Daily Training Bulletins (DTBs) or Department Directives. The training should cover this policy and address any relevant statutory changes and court decisions.
- (h) Reviewing each asset forfeiture case to ensure that:
  - 1. Written documentation of the seizure and the items seized is in the case file.
  - 2. Independent legal review of the circumstances and propriety of the seizure is made in a timely manner.
  - 3. Notice of seizure has been given in a timely manner to those who hold an interest in the seized property (Health and Safety Code § 11488.4).
  - 4. Property is promptly released to those entitled to its return (Health and Safety Code § 11488.2).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Asset Forfeiture*

---

5. All changes to forfeiture status are forwarded to any supervisor who initiates a forfeiture case.
  6. Any cash received is deposited with the fiscal agent.
  7. Assistance with the resolution of ownership claims and the release of property to those entitled is provided.
  8. Current minimum forfeiture thresholds are communicated appropriately to deputies.
  9. This policy and any related policies are periodically reviewed and updated to reflect current federal and state statutes and case law.
- (i) Ensuring that a written plan that enables the Sheriff to address any extended absence of the forfeiture reviewer, thereby ensuring that contact information for other law enforcement officers and attorneys who may assist in these matters is available.
  - (j) Ensuring that the process of selling or adding forfeited property to the department's regular inventory is in accordance with all applicable laws and consistent with the department's use and disposition of similar property.
  - (k) Keeping a manual that details the statutory grounds for forfeitures and department procedures related to asset forfeiture, including procedures for prompt notice to interest holders, the expeditious release of seized property, where appropriate, and the prompt resolution of claims of innocent ownership (Heath and Safety Code § 11469).
  - (l) Providing copies of seized business records to the person or business from whom such records were seized, when requested (Heath and Safety Code §11471).
  - (m) Notifying the California Franchise Tax Board when there is reasonable cause to believe that the value of seized property exceeds \$5,000.00 (Health and Safety Code § 11471.5).

Forfeiture proceeds should be maintained in a separate fund or account subject to appropriate accounting control, with regular reviews or audits of all deposits and expenditures.

Forfeiture reporting and expenditures should be completed in the manner prescribed by the law and County financial directives (Health and Safety Code § 11495).

#### **606.7 DISPOSITION OF FORFEITED PROPERTY**

Forfeited funds distributed under Health and Safety Code § 11489 et seq. shall only be used for purposes allowed by law, but in no case shall a peace officer's employment or salary depend upon the level of seizures or forfeitures he/she achieves (Heath and Safety Code § 11469).

The Department may request a court order so that certain uncontaminated science equipment is relinquished to a school or school district for science classroom education in lieu of destruction (Health and Safety Code § 11473; Health and Safety Code § 11473.5).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Asset Forfeiture*

---

### **606.7.1 RECEIVING EQUITABLE SHARES**

When participating in a joint investigation with a federal agency, the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall not receive an equitable share from the federal agency of all or a portion of the forfeiture proceeds absent either a required conviction under Health and Safety Code § 11471.2 or the flight, death or willful failure to appear of the defendant. This does not apply to forfeited cash or negotiable instruments of \$40,000 or more.

### **606.8 CLAIM INVESTIGATIONS**

An investigation shall be made as to any claimant of a vehicle, boat or airplane whose right, title, interest or lien is on the record in the Department of Motor Vehicles or in an appropriate federal agency. If investigation reveals that any person, other than the registered owner, is the legal owner, and that ownership did not arise subsequent to the date and time of arrest or notification of the forfeiture proceedings or seizure of the vehicle, boat or airplane, notice shall be made to the legal owner at his/her address appearing on the records of the Department of Motor Vehicles or the appropriate federal agency (Health and Safety Code § 11488.4).

# Informants

## 608.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the use of informants.

### 608.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Informant** - A person who covertly interacts with other individuals or suspects at the direction of, request of, or by agreement with, the Merced County Sheriff's Office for law enforcement purposes. This also includes a person agreeing to supply information to the Merced County Sheriff's Office for a benefit (e.g., a quid pro quo in the form of a reduced criminal penalty, money).

## 608.2 INFORMANT FILE SYSTEM

All Investigative Unit Supervisors or their respective designees shall be responsible for maintaining those respective units' informant files. A separate file shall be maintained on each confidential informant. For all other informants who do not fall under the responsibility of these units, the Detective Unit Supervisor shall maintain their files.

### 608.2.1 FILE SYSTEM PROCEDURE

Each file shall be coded with an assigned informant control number. An informant history shall be prepared to correspond to each informant file and include the following information:

- (a) Informant's name and/or aliases
- (b) Date of birth
- (c) Physical description: height, weight, hair color, eye color, race, sex, scars, tattoos or other distinguishing features
- (d) Current home address and telephone numbers
- (e) Next-of-Kin address and telephone numbers
- (f) Current employer(s), position, address(es) and telephone numbers
- (g) Vehicles owned and registration information
- (h) Places frequented
- (i) Informant's photograph
- (j) Briefs of information provided by the informant and his or her subsequent reliability. If an informant is determined to be unreliable, the informant's file is marked as "Unreliable"
- (k) Name of deputy initiating use of the informant
- (l) Signed informant agreement

## Informants

---

- (m) Update on active or inactive status of informant

The informant files shall be maintained in a secure area within the respective office. These files shall be used to provide a source of background information about the informant, enable review and evaluation of information given by the informant, and minimize incidents that could be used to question the integrity of detectives or the reliability of the confidential informant.

Access to the informant files shall be restricted to the Sheriff, Undersheriff, and the appropriate Investigative Unit Supervisor, or their designees.

### **608.3 USE OF INFORMANTS**

Before using an individual as a confidential informant, a deputy must receive approval from the appropriate supervisor. The deputy shall compile sufficient information through a background investigation in order to determine the reliability, credibility and suitability, of the individual, including age, maturity and risk of physical harm.

#### **608.3.1 JUVENILE INFORMANTS**

The use of juvenile informants under the age of 13-years is prohibited. Except as provided for in the enforcement of the Tobacco Enforcement Act, Business & Professions Code §§ 22950, et seq., the use of any juvenile informant between the ages of 13 and 18-years is only authorized by court order obtained pursuant to Penal Code § 701.5.

For purposes of this policy, a "juvenile informant" means any juvenile who participates, on behalf of this department, in a prearranged transaction or series of prearranged transactions with direct face-to-face contact with any party, when the juvenile's participation in the transaction is for the purpose of obtaining or attempting to obtain evidence of illegal activity by a third party and where the juvenile is participating in the transaction for the purpose of reducing or dismissing a pending juvenile petition against the juvenile.

### **608.4 POLICY**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes the value of informants to law enforcement efforts and will strive to protect the integrity of the informant process. It is the policy of this [department/office] that all funds related to informant payments will be routinely audited and that payments to informants will be made according to the criteria outlined in this policy.

### **608.5 USE OF INFORMANTS**

#### **608.5.1 INITIAL APPROVAL**

Before using an individual as an informant, a deputy must receive approval from his/her supervisor. The deputy shall compile sufficient information through a background investigation and experience with the informant in order to determine the suitability of the individual, including age, maturity and risk of physical harm, as well as any indicators of his/her reliability and credibility.

## *Informants*

---

Members of this [department/office] should not guarantee absolute safety or confidentiality to an informant.

### **608.5.2 JUVENILE INFORMANTS**

The use of informants under the age of 13 is prohibited.

Except for the enforcement of laws related to the commercial sale of alcohol, marijuana or tobacco products, a juvenile 13 years of age or older may only be used as an informant with the written consent of each of the following:

- (a) The juvenile's parents or legal guardians
- (b) The juvenile's attorney, if any
- (c) The court in which the juvenile's case is being handled, if applicable (Penal Code § 701.5)
- (d) The Sheriff or the authorized designee

### **608.5.3 INFORMANT AGREEMENTS**

All informants are required to sign and abide by the provisions of the designated [department/office] informant agreement. The deputy using the informant shall discuss each of the provisions of the agreement with the informant.

Details of the agreement are to be approved in writing by a supervisor before being finalized with the informant.

### **608.6 INFORMANT INTEGRITY**

To maintain the integrity of the informant process, the following must be adhered to:

- (a) The identity of an informant acting in a confidential capacity shall not be withheld from the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Investigative Unit Supervisor or their authorized designees.
  - 1. Identities of informants acting in a confidential capacity shall otherwise be kept confidential.
- (b) Criminal activity by informants shall not be condoned.
- (c) Informants shall be told they are not acting as sheriff's deputies, employees or agents of the Merced County Sheriff's Office, and that they shall not represent themselves as such.
- (d) The relationship between department members and informants shall always be ethical and professional.
  - 1. Members shall not become intimately involved with an informant.
  - 2. Social contact shall be avoided unless it is necessary to conduct an official investigation, and only with prior approval of the Investigative Unit Supervisor.
  - 3. Members shall neither solicit nor accept gratuities or engage in any private business transaction with an informant.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Informants*

---

- (e) Deputies shall not meet with informants in a private place unless accompanied by at least one additional deputy or with prior approval of the Investigative Unit Supervisor.
  - 1. Deputies may meet informants alone in an occupied public place, such as a restaurant.
- (f) When contacting informants for the purpose of making payments, deputies shall arrange for the presence of another deputy.
- (g) In all instances when department funds are paid to informants, a voucher shall be completed in advance, itemizing the expenses.
- (h) Since the decision rests with the appropriate prosecutor, deputies shall not promise that the informant will receive any form of leniency or immunity from criminal prosecution.

### **608.6.1 UNSUITABLE INFORMANTS**

The suitability of any informant should be considered before engaging him/her in any way in a covert or other investigative process. Members who become aware that an informant may be unsuitable will notify the supervisor, who will initiate a review to determine suitability. Until a determination has been made by a supervisor, the informant should not be used by any member. The supervisor shall determine whether the informant should be used by the [Department/Office] and, if so, what conditions will be placed on his/her participation or any information the informant provides. The supervisor shall document the decision and conditions in file notes and mark the file "unsuitable" when appropriate.

Considerations for determining whether an informant is unsuitable include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) The informant has provided untruthful or unreliable information in the past.
- (b) The informant behaves in a way that may endanger the safety of a deputy.
- (c) The informant reveals to suspects the identity of a deputy or the existence of an investigation.
- (d) The informant appears to be using his/her affiliation with this [department/office] to further criminal objectives.
- (e) The informant creates officer-safety issues by providing information to multiple law enforcement agencies simultaneously, without prior notification and approval of each agency.
- (f) The informant engages in any other behavior that could jeopardize the safety of deputies or the integrity of a criminal investigation.
- (g) The informant commits criminal acts subsequent to entering into an informant agreement.

### **608.7 INFORMANT FILES**

Informant files shall be utilized as a source of background information about the informant, to enable review and evaluation of information provided by the informant, and to minimize incidents

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Informants*

---

that could be used to question the integrity of department members or the reliability of the informant.

Informant files shall be maintained in a secure area within the Investigative Unit. The Investigative Unit Supervisor or the authorized designee shall be responsible for maintaining informant files. Access to the informant files shall be restricted to the Sheriff, Undersheriff, Investigative Unit supervisor or their authorized designees.

The Investigative Unit Supervisor and Undersheriff should arrange for an audit using a representative sample of randomly selected informant files on a periodic basis, but no less than one time per year. If the Investigative Unit Supervisor is replaced, the files will be audited before the new supervisor takes over management of the files. The purpose of the audit is to ensure compliance with file content and updating provisions of this policy. The audit should be conducted by a supervisor who does not have normal access to the informant files.

#### **608.7.1 FILE SYSTEM PROCEDURE**

A separate file shall be maintained on each informant and shall be coded with an assigned informant control number. An informant history that includes the following information shall be prepared for each file:

- (a) Name and aliases
- (b) Date of birth
- (c) Physical description: sex, race, height, weight, hair color, eye color, scars, tattoos or other distinguishing features
- (d) Photograph
- (e) Current home address and telephone numbers
- (f) Current employers, positions, addresses and telephone numbers
- (g) Vehicles owned and registration information
- (h) Places frequented
- (i) Briefs of information provided by the informant and his/her subsequent reliability
  - 1. If an informant is determined to be unsuitable, the informant's file is to be marked "unsuitable" and notations included detailing the issues that caused this classification.
- (j) Name of the deputy initiating use of the informant
- (k) Signed informant agreement
- (l) Update on active or inactive status of informant

#### **608.8 INFORMANT PAYMENTS**

No informant will be told in advance or given an exact amount or percentage for his/her service. The amount of funds to be paid to any informant will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- The extent of the informant's personal involvement in the case

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Informants*

---

- The significance, value or effect on crime
- The value of assets seized
- The quantity of the drugs or other contraband seized
- The informant's previous criminal activity
- The level of risk taken by the informant

The Investigative Unit supervisor will discuss the above factors with the Undersheriff and recommend the type and level of payment subject to approval by the Sheriff.

#### 608.8.1 PAYMENT PROCESS

Approved payments to an informant should be in cash using the following process:

- (a) Payments of \$500 and under may be paid in cash from Investigative Unit buy/expense fund.
  1. The Investigative Unit Supervisor shall sign the voucher for cash payouts from the buy/expense fund.
- (b) Payments exceeding \$500 shall be made by issuance of a check, payable to the deputy who will be delivering the payment.
  1. The check shall list the case numbers related to and supporting the payment.
  2. A written statement of the informant's involvement in the case shall be placed in the informant's file.
  3. The statement shall be signed by the informant verifying the statement as a true summary of his/her actions in the case.
  4. Authorization signatures from the Sheriff and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) are required for disbursement of the funds.
- (c) To complete the payment process for any amount, the deputy delivering the payment shall complete a cash transfer form.
  1. The cash transfer form shall include the following:
    - (a) Date
    - (b) Payment amount
    - (c) Merced County Sheriff's Office case number
    - (d) A statement that the informant is receiving funds in payment for information voluntarily rendered.
  2. The cash transfer form shall be signed by the informant.
  3. The cash transfer form will be kept in the informant's file.

#### 608.8.2 REPORTING OF PAYMENTS

Each informant receiving a cash payment shall be advised of his/her responsibility to report the cash to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as income. If funds distributed exceed \$600 in any

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Informants*

---

reporting year, the informant should be provided IRS Form 1099 (26 CFR 1.6041-1). If such documentation or reporting may reveal the identity of the informant and by doing so jeopardize any investigation, the safety of deputies or the safety of the informant (26 CFR 1.6041-3), then IRS Form 1099 should not be issued.

In such cases, the informant shall be provided a letter identifying the amount he/she must report on a tax return as "other income" and shall be required to provide a signed acknowledgement of receipt of the letter. The completed acknowledgement form and a copy of the letter shall be retained in the informant's file.

### 608.8.3 AUDIT OF PAYMENTS

The Investigative Unit Supervisor or the authorized designee shall be responsible for compliance with any audit requirements associated with grant provisions and applicable state and federal law.

At least once every six months, the Sheriff or the authorized designee should conduct an audit of all informant funds for the purpose of accountability and security of the funds. The funds and related documents (e.g., buy/expense fund records, cash transfer forms, invoices, receipts and logs) will assist with the audit process.

# Eyewitness Identification

## 610.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy sets forth guidelines to be used when members of this department employ eyewitness identification techniques.

### 610.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to the policy include:

**Eyewitness identification process** - Any field identification, live lineup or photographic identification.

**Field identification** - A live presentation of a single individual to a witness following the commission of a criminal offense for the purpose of identifying or eliminating the person as the suspect.

**Live lineup** - A live presentation of individuals to a witness for the purpose of identifying or eliminating an individual as the suspect.

**Photographic lineup** - Presentation of photographs to a witness for the purpose of identifying or eliminating an individual as the suspect.

## 610.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will strive to use eyewitness identification techniques, when appropriate, to enhance the investigative process and will emphasize identifying persons responsible for crime and exonerating the innocent.

## 610.3 INTERPRETIVE SERVICES

Members should make a reasonable effort to arrange for an interpreter before proceeding with eyewitness identification if communication with a witness is impeded due to language or hearing barriers.

Before the interpreter is permitted to discuss any matter with the witness, the investigating member should explain the identification process to the interpreter. Once it is determined that the interpreter comprehends the process and can explain it to the witness, the eyewitness identification may proceed as provided for within this policy.

## 610.4 EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION PROCESS AND FORM

The Detective Unit supervisor shall be responsible for the development and maintenance of an eyewitness identification process for use by members when they are conducting eyewitness identifications.

The process should include appropriate forms or reports that provide:

- (a) The date, time and location of the eyewitness identification procedure.
- (b) The name and identifying information of the witness.

## *Eyewitness Identification*

---

- (c) The name of the person administering the identification procedure.
- (d) If applicable, the names of all of the individuals present during the identification procedure.
- (e) An instruction to the witness that it is as important to exclude innocent persons as it is to identify a perpetrator.
- (f) An instruction to the witness that the perpetrator may or may not be among those presented and that the witness is not obligated to make an identification.
- (g) If the identification process is a photographic or live lineup, an instruction to the witness that the perpetrator may not appear exactly as he/she did on the date of the incident.
- (h) An instruction to the witness that the investigation will continue regardless of whether an identification is made by the witness.
- (i) A signature line where the witness acknowledges that he/she understands the identification procedures and instructions.
- (j) The investigator will document identification or non-identification by the witness. This statement should be taken at the time of the identification procedure.

### **610.5 EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION**

Members are cautioned not to, in any way, influence a witness as to whether any subject or photo presented in a lineup is in any way connected to the case.

Members should avoid mentioning that:

- The individual was apprehended near the crime scene.
- The evidence points to the individual as the suspect.
- Other witnesses have identified or failed to identify the individual as the suspect.

In order to avoid undue influence, witnesses should view suspects or a lineup individually and outside the presence of other witnesses. Witnesses should be instructed to avoid discussing details of the incident or of the identification process with other witnesses.

Whenever feasible, the eyewitness identification procedure should be audio and/or video recorded and the recording should be retained according to current evidence procedures.

### **610.6 DOCUMENTATION**

A thorough description of the eyewitness process and the results of any eyewitness identification should be documented in the case report.

If a photographic lineup is utilized, a copy of the photographic lineup presented to the witness should be included in the case report. In addition, the order in which the photographs were presented to the witness should be documented in the case report.

## *Eyewitness Identification*

---

### **610.7 PHOTOGRAPHIC LINEUP AND LIVE LINEUP CONSIDERATIONS**

When practicable, the member presenting the lineup should not be involved in the investigation of the case or know the identity of the suspect. In no case should the member presenting a lineup to a witness know which photograph or person in the lineup is being viewed by the witness. Techniques to achieve this include randomly numbering photographs, shuffling folders or using a computer program to order the persons in the lineup.

Individuals in the lineup should reasonably match the description of the perpetrator provided by the witness and should bear similar characteristics to avoid causing any person to unreasonably stand out. In cases involving multiple suspects, a separate lineup should be conducted for each suspect. The suspects should be placed in a different order within each lineup.

The member presenting the lineup should do so sequentially (i.e., show the witness one person at a time) and not simultaneously. The witness should view all persons in the lineup.

A live lineup should only be used before criminal proceedings have been initiated against the suspect. If there is any question as to whether any criminal proceedings have begun, the investigating member should contact the appropriate prosecuting attorney before proceeding.

### **610.8 FIELD IDENTIFICATION CONSIDERATIONS**

Field identifications, also known as field elimination show-ups or one-on-one identifications, may be helpful in certain cases, where exigent circumstances make it impracticable to conduct a photo or live lineup identifications. A field elimination or show-up identification should not be used when independent probable cause exists to arrest a suspect. In such cases a live or photo lineup is the preferred course of action if eyewitness identification is contemplated.

When initiating a field identification, the member should observe the following guidelines:

- (a) Obtain a complete description of the suspect from the witness.
- (b) Assess whether a witness should be included in a field identification process by considering:
  - 1. The length of time the witness observed the suspect.
  - 2. The distance between the witness and the suspect.
  - 3. Whether the witness could view the suspect's face.
  - 4. The quality of the lighting when the suspect was observed by the witness.
  - 5. Whether there were distracting noises or activity during the observation.
  - 6. Any other circumstances affecting the witness's opportunity to observe the suspect.
  - 7. The length of time that has elapsed since the witness observed the suspect.
- (c) If safe and practicable, the person who is the subject of the show-up should not be handcuffed or in a patrol vehicle.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Eyewitness Identification*

---

- (d) When feasible, members should bring the witness to the location of the subject of the show-up, rather than bring the subject of the show-up to the witness.
- (e) The person who is the subject of the show-up should not be shown to the same witness more than once.
- (f) In cases involving multiple suspects, witnesses should only be permitted to view the subjects of the show-up one at a time.
- (g) The person who is the subject of the show-up should not be required to put on clothing worn by the suspect, to speak words uttered by the suspect or to perform other actions mimicking those of the suspect.
- (h) If a witness positively identifies a subject of the show-up as the suspect, members should not conduct any further field identifications with other witnesses for that suspect. In such instances members should document the contact information for any additional witnesses for follow up, if necessary.

# Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Operations

## 613.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of an unmanned aerial system (UAS) and for the storage, retrieval and dissemination of images and data captured by the UAS.

### 613.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Unmanned Aerial System (UAS)** - An unmanned aircraft of any type that is capable of sustaining directed flight, whether preprogrammed or remotely controlled (commonly referred to as an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)), and all of the supporting or attached systems designed for gathering information through imaging, recording or any other means.

## 613.2 POLICY

Unmanned aerial systems may be utilized to enhance the department's mission of protecting lives and property when other means and resources are not available or are less effective. Any use of a UAS will be in strict accordance with constitutional and privacy rights and Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations.

## 613.3 PRIVACY

The use of the UAS potentially involves privacy considerations. Absent a warrant or exigent circumstances, operators and observers shall adhere to FAA altitude regulations and shall not intentionally record or transmit images of any location where a person would have a reasonable expectation of privacy (e.g., residence, yard, enclosure). Operators and observers shall take reasonable precautions to avoid inadvertently recording or transmitting images of areas where there is a reasonable expectation of privacy. Reasonable precautions can include, for example, deactivating or turning imaging devices away from such areas or persons during UAS operations.

## 613.4 PROGRAM MANAGER AND PROGRAM COORDINATOR

The Operations Captain will serve as the program manager. An Operations Sergeant will serve as the program coordinator and be responsible for the supervision, department documentation, FAA documentation and training of the UAS program. The program coordinator will ensure that policies and procedures conform to current laws, regulations and best practices and will have the following additional responsibilities:

- Coordinating the FAA Certificate of Waiver or Authorization (COA) application process and ensuring that the COA is current.
- Ensuring that all authorized operators and required observers have completed all required FAA and department-approved training in the operation, applicable laws, policies and procedures regarding use of the UAS.
- Developing uniform protocol for submission and evaluation of requests to deploy a UAS, including urgent requests made during ongoing or emerging incidents.

## *Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Operations*

---

Deployment of a UAS shall require written authorization of the Sheriff or the authorized designee, depending on the type of mission.

- Developing protocol for conducting criminal investigations involving a UAS, including documentation of time spent monitoring a subject.
- Implementing a system for public notification of UAS deployment.
- Developing an operational protocol governing the deployment and operation of a UAS including, but not limited to, safety oversight, use of visual observers, establishment of lost link procedures and secure communication with air traffic control facilities.
- Developing a protocol for fully documenting all missions.
- Developing a UAS inspection, maintenance and record-keeping protocol to ensure continuing airworthiness of a UAS, up to and including its overhaul or life limits.
- Developing protocols to ensure that all data intended to be used as evidence are accessed, maintained, stored and retrieved in a manner that ensures its integrity as evidence, including strict adherence to chain of custody requirements. Electronic trails, including encryption, authenticity certificates and date and time stamping, shall be used as appropriate to preserve individual rights and to ensure the authenticity and maintenance of a secure evidentiary chain of custody.
- Developing protocols that ensure retention and purge periods are maintained in accordance with established records retention schedules.
- Facilitating law enforcement access to images and data captured by the UAS.
- Recommending program enhancements, particularly regarding safety and information security.
- Ensuring that established protocols are followed by monitoring and providing periodic reports on the program.

### **613.5 USE OF UAS**

Only authorized operators who have completed the required training shall be permitted to operate the UAS.

Use of vision enhancement technology (e.g., thermal and other imaging equipment not generally available to the public) is permissible in viewing areas only where there is no protectable privacy interest or when in compliance with a search warrant or court order. In all other instances, legal counsel should be consulted.

UAS operations should only be conducted during daylight hours and a UAS should not be flown over populated areas without FAA approval.

### **613.6 PROHIBITED USE**

The UAS video surveillance equipment shall not be used:

- To conduct random surveillance activities.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Unmanned Aerial System (UAS) Operations*

---

- To target a person based solely on individual characteristics, such as, but not limited to race, ethnicity, national origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
- To harass, intimidate or discriminate against any individual or group.
- To conduct personal business of any type.

The UAS shall not be weaponized.

#### **613.7 RETENTION OF UAS DATA**

Data collected by the UAS shall be retained as provided in the established records retention schedule.

## Warrant Service

### 614.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the planning and serving of arrest and search warrants by members of this department. It is understood that this policy cannot address every variable or circumstance that can arise in the service of a search or arrest warrant, as these tasks can involve rapidly evolving and unique circumstances.

This policy is intended to be used in conjunction with the Operations Planning and Deconfliction Policy, which has additional guidance on planning and serving high-risk warrants.

This policy is not intended to address the service of search warrants on locations or property already secured or routine field warrant arrests by patrol deputies.

### 614.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to balance the safety needs of the public, the safety of department members, privacy interests and other relevant factors when making decisions related to the service of search and arrest warrants.

### 614.3 OPERATIONS

The Operations Captain or appropriate designee shall review all risk assessment forms with the involved supervisor to determine the risk level of the warrant service.

The Operations Captain or appropriate designee will also have the responsibility to coordinate service of those warrants that are categorized as high risk. Deconfliction, risk assessment, operational planning, briefing and debriefing should follow guidelines in the Operations Planning and Deconfliction Policy.

### 614.4 SEARCH WARRANTS

Deputies should receive authorization from a supervisor before preparing a search warrant application. Once authorization is received, the deputy will prepare the affidavit and search warrant, consulting with the applicable prosecuting attorney as needed. He/she will also complete the risk assessment form and submit it, along with the warrant affidavit, to the appropriate supervisor and the operations director for review and classification of risk (see the Operations Planning and Deconfliction Policy).

### 614.5 ARREST WARRANTS

If a deputy reasonably believes that serving an arrest warrant may pose a higher risk than commonly faced on a daily basis, the deputy should complete the risk assessment form and submit it to the appropriate supervisor and the operations director for review and classification of risk (see the Operations Planning and Deconfliction Policy).

## Warrant Service

---

If the warrant is classified as high risk, service will be coordinated by the operations director. If the warrant is not classified as high risk, the supervisor should weigh the risk of entry into a residence to make an arrest against other alternatives, such as arresting the person outside the residence where circumstances may pose a lower risk.

### **614.6 WARRANT PREPARATION**

A deputy who prepares a warrant should ensure the documentation in support of the warrant contains as applicable:

- (a) Probable cause to support the search or arrest, including relevant dates and times to demonstrate timeliness and facts to support any request for nighttime warrant execution.
- (b) A clear explanation of the affiant's training, experience and relevant education.
- (c) Adequately supported opinions, when relevant, that are not left to unsubstantiated conclusions.
- (d) A nexus between the place to be searched and the persons or items central to the investigation. The facts supporting this nexus should be clear and current. For example, the affidavit shall explain why there is probable cause to believe that a particular person is currently residing at a particular location or that the items sought are present at a particular location.
- (e) Full disclosure of known or suspected residents at the involved location and any indication of separate living spaces at the involved location. For example, it should be disclosed that several people may be renting bedrooms at a single location, even if the exact location of the rooms is not known.
- (f) A specific description of the location to be searched, including photographs of the location, if reasonably available.
- (g) A sufficient description of the items to be seized.
- (h) Full disclosure of any known exculpatory information relevant to the warrant application (refer to the Brady Material Disclosure Policy).

### **614.7 HIGH-RISK WARRANT SERVICE**

The Operations Captain or the authorized designee shall coordinate the service of warrants that are categorized as high risk and shall have sole authority in determining the manner in which the warrant will be served, including the number of deputies deployed.

The member responsible for directing the service should ensure the following as applicable:

- (a) When practicable and when doing so does not cause unreasonable risk, video or photographic documentation is made of the condition of the location prior to execution of a search warrant. The images should include the surrounding area and persons present.
- (b) The warrant service is audio- and video-recorded when practicable and reasonable to do so.

## Warrant Service

---

- (c) Evidence is handled and collected only by those members who are designated to do so. All other members involved in the service of the warrant should alert one of the designated members to the presence of potential evidence and not touch or disturb the items.
- (d) Reasonable efforts are made during the search to maintain or restore the condition of the location.
- (e) Persons who are detained as part of the warrant service are handled appropriately under the circumstances.
- (f) Reasonable care provisions are made for children and dependent adults (see the Child and Dependent Adult Safety Policy).
- (g) A list is made of all items seized and a copy provided to the person in charge of the premises if present or otherwise left in a conspicuous place.
- (h) A copy of the search warrant is left at the location.
- (i) The condition of the property is documented with video recording or photographs after the search.
- (j) A Sheriff's Office Search Warrant/Arrest Warrant Threat Matrix shall be completed prior to service of the search/arrest warrant (refer to Section 461 - Search/Arrest Warrant Threat Matrix policy).

### **614.8 DETENTIONS DURING WARRANT SERVICE**

Deputies must be sensitive to the safety risks of all persons involved with the service of a warrant. Depending on circumstances and facts present, it may be appropriate to control movements of any or all persons present at a warrant service, including those who may not be the subject of a warrant or suspected in the case. However, deputies must be mindful that only reasonable force may be used and weapons should be displayed no longer than the deputy reasonably believes is necessary (see the Use of Force Policy).

As soon as it can be determined that an individual is not subject to the scope of a warrant and that no further reasonable suspicion or safety concerns exist to justify further detention, the person should be promptly released.

Deputies should, when and to the extent reasonable, accommodate the privacy and personal needs of people who have been detained.

### **614.9 ACTIONS AFTER WARRANT SERVICE**

The supervisor shall ensure that all affidavits, warrants, receipts and returns, regardless of any associated cases, are filed with the issuing judge or magistrate as soon as reasonably possible, but in any event no later than any date specified on the warrant.

## *Warrant Service*

---

### **614.10 OUTSIDE AGENCIES AND CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL WARRANTS**

The Operations Captain will ensure that cooperative efforts with other agencies in the service of warrants conform to existing mutual aid agreements or other memorandums of understanding and will work cooperatively to mitigate risks including, but not limited to, the following:

- Identity of team members
- Roles and responsibilities
- Familiarity with equipment
- Rules of engagement
- Asset forfeiture procedures

Any outside agency requesting assistance in the service of a warrant within this jurisdiction should be referred to the operations director. The director should review and confirm the warrant, including the warrant location, and should discuss the service with the appropriate supervisor from the other agency. The director should ensure that members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office are utilized appropriately. Any concerns regarding the requested use of Merced County Sheriff's Office members should be brought to the attention of the Sheriff or the authorized designee. The actual service of the warrant will remain the responsibility of the agency requesting assistance.

If the Operations Captain is unavailable, the Area Lieutenant should assume this role.

If deputies intend to serve a warrant outside Merced County Sheriff's Office jurisdiction, the operations director should provide reasonable advance notice to the applicable agency, request assistance as needed and work cooperatively on operational planning and the mitigation of risks detailed in this policy.

Deputies will remain subject to the policies of the Merced County Sheriff's Office when assisting outside agencies or serving a warrant outside Merced County Sheriff's Office jurisdiction.

### **614.11 MEDIA ACCESS**

No advance information regarding warrant service operations shall be released without the approval of the Sheriff. Any media inquiries or press release after the fact shall be handled in accordance with the News Media Relations Policy.

### **614.12 TRAINING**

The shift supervisors should ensure deputies receive periodic training on this policy and associated topics, such as legal issues, warrant preparation, warrant service and reporting requirements.

# Operations Planning and Deconfliction

## 615.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for planning, deconfliction and execution of high-risk operations regardless of the scale of the operation.

Additional guidance on planning and serving high-risk warrants is provided in the Warrant Service Policy and the Search/Arrest Warrant Matrix Policy Section 461.

### 615.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**High-risk operations** - Operations, including service of search and arrest warrants, large multi-agency enforcement operations, and undercover sting operations. These events are likely to present higher risks than are commonly faced by deputies on a daily basis, including suspected fortified locations, reasonable risk of violence or confrontation with multiple persons, or reason to suspect that persons anticipate the operation.

## 615.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to properly plan and carry out high-risk operations, including participation in a regional deconfliction system, in order to provide coordination, enhance the safety of members and the public, decrease the risk of compromising investigations and prevent duplicating efforts.

## 615.3 INCIDENT COMMANDER

The Sheriff will designate a member of this department to be the Incident Commander based on the type of enforcement action being planned.

The Incident Commander will utilize the departments search/arrest warrant threat matrix risk assessment form to assess, plan and coordinate operations. This form should provide a process to identify high-risk operations.

The Incident Commander will review risk assessment forms with involved supervisors to determine whether a particular incident qualifies as a high-risk operation. The director will also have the responsibility for coordinating operations that are categorized as high risk.

## 615.4 RISK ASSESSMENT

### 615.4.1 RISK ASSESSMENT FORM PREPARATION

Deputies assigned as operational leads for any operation that may qualify as a high-risk operation shall complete a risk assessment form.

When preparing the form, the deputy should query all relevant and reasonably available intelligence resources for information about the subject of investigation, others who may be present and the involved location. These sources may include regional intelligence and criminal

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Operations Planning and Deconfliction*

---

justice databases, target deconfliction systems, firearm records, commercial databases and property records. Where appropriate, the deputy should also submit information to these resources.

The deputy should gather available information that includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Photographs, including aerial photographs, if available, of the involved location, neighboring yards and obstacles.
- (b) Maps of the location.
- (c) Diagrams of any property and the interior of any buildings that are involved.
- (d) Historical information about the subject of investigation (e.g., history of weapon possession or use, known mental illness, known drug use, threats against police, gang affiliation, criminal history).
- (e) Historical information about others who may be present at the location (e.g., other criminals, innocent third parties, dependent adults, children, animals).
- (f) Obstacles associated with the location (e.g., fortification, booby traps, reinforced doors/windows, surveillance measures, number and type of buildings, geographic and perimeter barriers, the number and types of weapons likely to be present, information that suggests the presence of explosives, chemicals or other hazardous materials, the potential for multiple dwellings or living spaces, availability of keys/door combinations).
- (g) Other environmental factors (e.g., nearby venues such as schools and day care centers, proximity of adjacent homes or other occupied buildings, anticipated pedestrian and vehicle traffic at the time of service).
- (h) Other available options that may minimize the risk to deputies and others (e.g., making an off-site arrest or detention of the subject of investigation).

#### 615.4.2 RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

Deputies will present the risk assessment form and other relevant documents (such as copies of search warrants and affidavits and arrest warrants) to their supervisor and the operations director.

The supervisor and operations director shall confer and determine the level of risk. Supervisors should take reasonable actions if there is a change in circumstances that elevates the risks associated with the operation.

#### 615.4.3 HIGH-RISK OPERATIONS

If the Incident Commander, after consultation with the involved supervisor, determines that the operation is high risk, the operations director should:

- (a) Determine what resources will be needed at the location, and contact and/or place on standby any of the following appropriate and available resources:
  - 1. SWAT Team - inclusive of CNT, TSU and TEMS
  - 2. Additional personnel
  - 3. Outside agency assistance

## *Operations Planning and Deconfliction*

---

4. Special equipment
  5. Medical personnel
  6. Persons trained in negotiation
  7. Additional surveillance
  8. Canines
  9. Evidence Room or analytical personnel to assist with cataloguing seizures
  10. Forensic specialists
  11. Specialized mapping for larger or complex locations
- (b) Contact the appropriate department members or other agencies as warranted to begin preparation.
  - (c) Ensure that all legal documents such as search warrants are complete and have any modifications reasonably necessary to support the operation.
  - (d) Coordinate the actual operation.

### **615.5 DECONFLICTION**

Deconfliction systems are designed to identify persons and locations associated with investigations or law enforcement operations and alert participating agencies when others are planning or conducting operations in close proximity or time or are investigating the same individuals, groups or locations.

The deputy who is the operations lead shall ensure the subject of investigation and operations information have been entered in an applicable deconfliction system to determine if there is reported conflicting activity. This should occur as early in the process as practicable, but no later than two hours prior to the commencement of the operation. The deputy should also enter relevant updated information when it is received.

If any conflict is discovered, the supervisor will contact the involved jurisdiction and resolve the potential conflict before proceeding.

### **615.6 OPERATIONS PLAN**

The Incident Commander shall ensure that a written operations plan involving Incident Command Documentation is developed for all high-risk operations. Plans should also be considered for other operations that would benefit from having a formal plan.

The plan should address such issues as:

- (a) Operation goals, objectives and strategies.
- (b) Operation location and people:
  1. The subject of investigation (e.g., history of weapon possession/use, known mental illness issues, known drug use, threats against police, gang affiliation, criminal history)

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Operations Planning and Deconfliction*

---

2. The location (e.g., fortification, booby traps, reinforced doors/windows, surveillance cameras and/or lookouts, number/type of buildings, geographic and perimeter barriers, the number and types of weapons likely to be present, information that suggests the presence of explosives, chemicals or other hazardous materials, the potential for multiple dwellings or living spaces, availability of keys/door combinations), including aerial photos, if available, and maps of neighboring yards and obstacles, diagrams and other visual aids
  3. Other environmental factors (e.g., nearby venues such as schools and day care centers, proximity of adjacent homes or other occupied buildings, anticipated pedestrian and vehicle traffic at the time of service)
  4. Identification of other people who may be present in or around the operation, such as other criminal suspects, innocent third parties and children
- (c) Information from the risk assessment form by attaching a completed copy in the operational plan.
1. The volume or complexity of the information may indicate that the plan includes a synopsis of the information contained on the risk assessment form to ensure clarity and highlighting of critical information.
- (d) Participants and their roles.
1. An adequate number of uniformed deputies should be included in the operation team to provide reasonable notice of a legitimate law enforcement operation.
  2. How all participants will be identified as law enforcement.
- (e) Whether deconfliction submissions are current and all involved individuals, groups and locations have been deconflicted to the extent reasonably practicable.
- (f) Identification of all communications channels and call-signs.
- (g) Use of force issues.
- (h) Contingencies for handling medical emergencies (e.g., services available at the location, closest hospital, closest trauma center).
- (i) Plans for detaining people who are not under arrest.
- (j) Contingencies for handling children, dependent adults, animals and other people who might be at the location in accordance with the Child Abuse, Adult Abuse, Child and Dependent Adult Safety and Animal Control policies.
- (k) Communications plan
- (l) Responsibilities for writing, collecting, reviewing and approving reports.

#### 615.6.1 OPERATIONS PLAN RETENTION

Since the operations plan contains intelligence information and descriptions of law enforcement tactics, it shall not be filed with the report. The operations plan shall be stored separately and retained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

## *Operations Planning and Deconfliction*

---

### **615.7 OPERATIONS BRIEFING**

A briefing should be held prior to the commencement of any high-risk operation to allow all participants to understand the operation, see and identify each other, identify roles and responsibilities and ask questions or seek clarification as needed. Anyone who is not present at the briefing should not respond to the operation location without specific supervisory approval.

- (a) The briefing should include a verbal review of plan elements, using visual aids, to enhance the participants' understanding of the operations plan.
- (b) All participants should be provided a copy of the operations plan and search warrant, if applicable. Participating personnel should be directed to read the search warrant and initial a copy that is retained with the operation plan. Any items to be seized should be identified at the briefing.
- (c) The operations director shall ensure that all participants are visually identifiable as law enforcement officers.
  - 1. Exceptions may be made by the operations director for deputies who are conducting surveillance or working under cover. However, those members exempt from visual identification should be able to transition to a visible law enforcement indicator at the time of enforcement actions, such as entries or arrests, if necessary.
- (d) The briefing should include details of the communications plan.
  - 1. It is the responsibility of the operations director to ensure that Dispatch is notified of the time and location of the operation, and to provide a copy of the operation plan prior to deputies arriving at the location.
  - 2. If the radio channel needs to be monitored by Dispatch, the dispatcher assigned to monitor the operation should attend the briefing, if practicable, but at a minimum should receive a copy of the operation plan.
  - 3. The briefing should include a communications check to ensure that all participants are able to communicate with the available equipment on the designated radio channel.

### **615.8 SWAT PARTICIPATION**

If the Incident Commander determines that SWAT participation is appropriate, the Incident Commander and the SWAT Team Commander shall work together to develop a written plan. The SWAT Team Commander shall assume operational control until all persons at the scene are appropriately detained and it is safe to begin a search. When this occurs, the SWAT Team Commander shall transfer control of the scene to the handling supervisor. This transfer should be communicated to the deputies present.

### **615.9 MEDIA ACCESS**

No advance information regarding planned operations shall be released without the approval of the Sheriff. Any media inquiries or press release after the fact shall be handled in accordance with the News Media Relations Policy.

## *Operations Planning and Deconfliction*

---

### **615.10 OPERATIONS DEBRIEFING**

High-risk operations should be debriefed as soon as reasonably practicable. The debriefing should include as many participants as possible. This debrief may be separate from any SWAT debriefing.

### **615.11 TRAINING**

The Operations Captain should ensure deputies and SWAT team members who participate in operations subject to this policy should receive periodic training including, but not limited to, topics such as legal issues, deconfliction practices, operations planning concepts and reporting requirements.

## Chapter 7 - Equipment

## Department Owned and Personal Property

### 700.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Department employees are expected to properly care for department property assigned or entrusted to them. Employees may also suffer occasional loss or damage to personal or department property while performing their assigned duty. Certain procedures are required depending on the loss and ownership of the item.

### 700.2 CARE OF DEPARTMENTAL PROPERTY

Employees shall be responsible for the safekeeping, serviceable condition, proper care, use and replacement of department property assigned or entrusted to them. An employee's intentional or negligent abuse or misuse of department property may lead to discipline including, but not limited to the cost of repair or replacement.

- (a) Employees shall promptly report through their chain of command, any loss, damage to, or unserviceable condition of any department issued property or equipment assigned for their use.
- (b) The use of damaged or unserviceable department property should be discontinued as soon as practical and replaced with comparable Department property as soon as available and following notice to a supervisor.
- (c) Except when otherwise directed by competent authority or required by exigent circumstances, department property shall only be used by those to whom it was assigned. Use should be limited to official purposes and in the capacity for which it was designed.
- (d) Department property shall not be thrown away, sold, traded, donated, destroyed, or otherwise disposed of without proper authority.
- (e) In the event that any Department property becomes damaged or unserviceable, no employee shall attempt to repair the property without prior approval of a supervisor.

### 700.3 FILING CLAIMS FOR PERSONAL PROPERTY

Claims for reimbursement for damage or loss of personal property must be made on the proper form. This form is submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor. The supervisor may require a separate written report of the loss or damage.

The supervisor shall direct a memo to the employee's respective Division Captain or Administrative Manager, which shall include the results of his/her investigation and whether the employee followed proper procedures. The supervisor's report shall address whether reasonable care was taken to prevent the loss or damage.

## *Department Owned and Personal Property*

---

Upon review by staff and a finding that no misconduct or negligence was involved, repair or replacement may be recommended by the Sheriff who will then forward the claim to the Finance Department.

The Department will not replace or repair luxurious or overly expensive items (jewelry, exotic equipment, etc.) that are not reasonably required as a part of work.

### **700.3.1 REPORTING REQUIREMENT**

A verbal report shall be made to the employee's immediate supervisor as soon as circumstances permit.

A written report shall be submitted before the employee goes off duty or within the time frame directed by the supervisor to whom the verbal report is made.

### **700.4 LOSS OR DAMAGE OF PROPERTY OF ANOTHER**

Deputies and other employees intentionally or unintentionally may cause damage to the real or personal property of another while performing their duties. Any employee who damages or causes to be damaged any real or personal property of another while performing any law enforcement functions, regardless of jurisdiction, shall report it as provided below.

- (a) A verbal report shall be made to the employee's immediate supervisor as soon as circumstances permit.
- (b) A written report shall be submitted before the employee goes off duty or within the time frame directed by the supervisor to whom the verbal report is made.

#### **700.4.1 DAMAGE BY PERSON OF ANOTHER AGENCY**

If employees of another jurisdiction cause damage to real or personal property belonging to the County, it shall be the responsibility of the employee present or the employee responsible for the property to make a verbal report to his/her immediate supervisor as soon as circumstances permit. The employee shall submit a written report before going off duty or as otherwise directed by the supervisor.

These written reports, accompanied by the supervisor's written report, shall promptly be forwarded to the appropriate division captain or Administrative Manager.

## Weapons Retained for Official use

### 701.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Penal Code Section 12030 allows agencies to retrain firearms for departmental use. With the approval of the Sheriff or his designee, the Sheriff's Community Service Technician in charge of evidence may release the firearm(s) to the department range master/armorer. When the department no longer requires the firearm(s), it shall be turned back over to the Sheriff's Community Service Technician in charge of evidence for destruction pursuant to Penal Code Section 12030(c).

#### 701.1.1 DISPOSITION OF FIREARMS

Weapons retained for department use:

- (a) The Sheriff or his designee shall authorize all firearms retained for office use by the department.
- (b) A court order must be obtained from a magistrate authorizing the retention of the firearm for department use.
- (c) The make, model and serial number will be recorded on the department's weapon inventory log maintained by the range master/armorer.
- (d) The range master shall enter the information on each weapon into the California Department of Justice Automated Firearms System.

#### 701.1.2 DISPOSITION OF EXCESS AMMUNITION

Ammunition retained for department use:

- (a) Surplus small arms and rifle ammunition may be retained by the department for official use.
- (b) Ammunition retained for department use will be stored by the Community Service Technician in charge of evidence.
- (c) Ammunition may be issued to employees only for official duties and only after authorized by the Sheriff or his designee.

## Personal Communication Devices

### 702.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for the use of mobile telephones and communication devices, issued or funded by the Department while on-duty.

This policy generically refers to all such devices as Personal Communication Devices (PCD's) but is intended to include all issued mobile telephones, issued personal digital assistants (PDA's), issued wireless capable tablets and similar wireless two-way communications and/or portable Internet access devices. PCD use includes, but is not limited to, placing and receiving calls, text messaging, blogging and micro-blogging, emailing, using video or camera features, playing games and accessing sites or services on the Internet.

Due to the ever changing laws regarding employee owned PCD's used while at work, employees are encouraged to not use their own PCD's while at work. This does not preclude employees from using their own PCD's at work. Employees are cautioned about current legal statutes and unforeseen changes that could cause their own PCD to be exposed through the CPRA or other legal means.

#### 702.1.1 POLICY

Any issued PCD used while on-duty, or used off-duty in any manner reasonably related to the affairs of the Department, will be subject to monitoring and inspection consistent with the standards set forth in this policy. The inappropriate use of an issued PCD while on-duty may impair officer safety. Employees who have questions regarding the application of this policy or the guidelines contained herein are encouraged to seek clarification from supervisory personnel.

### 702.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office allows members to utilize department-issued or funded PCD's in the workplace, subject to certain limitations. Any issued PCD used while on-duty, or used off-duty in any manner reasonably related to the business of the Department, will be subject to monitoring and inspection consistent with the standards set forth in this policy.

The inappropriate use of an issued PCD while on-duty may impair officer safety. Additionally, members are advised and cautioned that the use of an issued PCD either on-duty or after duty hours for business-related purposes may subject the member and the member's PCD records to civil or criminal discovery or disclosure under applicable public records laws.

Members who have questions regarding the application of this policy or the guidelines contained herein are encouraged to seek clarification from supervisory personnel.

#### 702.2.1 USE OF PERSONAL COMMUNICATIONS DEVICE (PCD): PATROL & DISPATCH

The use of PCD's between employees to conduct official business can present both safety and legal issues regarding the discoverability of such communications. Therefore, absent an emergency or other justifiable reason, deputies and Dispatch personnel are to communicate by

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personal Communication Devices*

---

radio and should refrain from communicating directly with each other when either is using a department-issued or personally-owned communications device.

#### **702.2.2 PCD IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES**

The loss, theft, misplacement, and unauthorized introductions of communications devices, whether department-issued or personally owned, belonging to employees and non-employees in jail facilities pose a significant risk to the safety and security of the jails. These devices include, but are not limited to, cellular type telephones, personal digital assistants (PDAs), notebooks, laptops, tablets, or other devices with or without wireless and/or Internet capabilities.

All employees, both sworn and non-sworn, and non-employees, including vendors, contractors, attorneys, and visitors, are prohibited from using any such communication devices within jail facilities, including institutional grounds, unless the use of these devices is in an area not visible to any inmates or necessary in the case of an emergency. Law enforcement personnel from outside agencies and Merced County personnel conducting county business are permitted to possess such devices subject to the same restrictions applying to this department's personnel. Authorized vendors also are permitted to possess and utilize such devices subject to these restrictions; however, such vendors may be required to secure such communications devices prior to entry into the jail facilities subject to security needs as determined by the on-duty supervisor. The office land-line telephones within the jail facilities are available for personnel for communications for reasonable uses and times. The loss of any such device must be reported to a supervisor as soon as the loss is discovered.

#### **702.3 PRIVACY EXPECTATION**

Members forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to any communication accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any PCD issued or funded by the Department/Office and shall have no expectation of privacy in their location should the device be equipped with location detection capabilities (see the Information Technology Use Policy for additional guidance).

#### **702.3.1 CALIFORNIA ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS PRIVACY ACT (CALECPA)**

No member is authorized to be the sole possessor of a department-issued PCD. Department-issued PCD's can be retrieved, reassigned, accessed or used by any member as directed by a supervisor without notice. Member use of a department-issued PCD and use of a personal PCD at work or for work-related business constitutes specific consent for access for department purposes. Prior to conducting an administrative search of a PCD, supervisors should consult legal counsel to ensure access is consistent with CalECPA (Penal Code § 1546; Penal Code § 1546.1).

#### **702.4 DEPARTMENT-ISSUED PCD**

Depending on a member's assignment and the needs of the position, the Department may, at its discretion, issue or fund a PCD. Department-issued or funded PCD's are provided as a convenience to facilitate on-duty performance only. Such devices and the associated telephone number shall remain the sole property of the Department and shall be subject to inspection or monitoring (including all related records and content) at any time without notice and without cause.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personal Communication Devices*

---

Unless a member is expressly authorized by the Sheriff or the authorized designee for off-duty use of the PCD, the PCD will either be secured in the workplace at the completion of the tour of duty or will be turned off when leaving the workplace. This section refers to the department attempt to provide assigned PCD's to patrol units/deputies while working on their shift. It is the intent of the department to provide issued PCD's to patrol deputies when funding becomes available. It is unclear when this may happen.

Members who are assigned issued PCD's as part of their on call assignment may take their phone with them 24/7 due to their on call status (Detectives, SWAT, Dive, SAR, etc) and do not have to secure their issued PCD at work.

#### **702.5 PERSONALLY OWNED PCD**

Members may carry a personally owned PCD while on-duty, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

- (a) Permission to carry a personally owned PCD may be revoked if it is used contrary to provisions of this policy.
- (b) The Department accepts no responsibility for loss of or damage to a personally owned PCD.
- (c) The PCD and any associated services shall be purchased, used and maintained solely at the member's expense.
- (d) The device should not be used for work-related purposes except in exigent circumstances (e.g., unavailability of radio communications). Members may have a reduced expectation of privacy when using a personally owned PCD, regardless of the circumstances, in the workplace and may have no expectation of privacy with regard to any department business-related communication. Members are strongly encouraged not to use their own PCD while at work; the department may have no recourse in the event of a CPRA request or other legal means when an employee's PCD is used while at work.
  - 1. If a member uses their own PCD for work purposes, they do so at their own risk.
- (e) The device shall not be utilized to record or disclose any business-related information, including photographs, video or the recording or transmittal of any information or material obtained or made accessible as a result of employment with the Department, without the express authorization of the Sheriff or the authorized designee.
- (f) Use of a personally owned PCD while at work or for work-related business may subject the employees PCD to current civil and criminal law statutes. This may include litigation, public records retention and release obligations through lawful means. If the PCD is carried on-duty, members will provide the Department with the telephone number of the device so the communications division or supervisor can make contact in the event of an emergency, radio failure, or other unforeseen urgent circumstance.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Personal Communication Devices*

---

- (g) Employees should not use their personally owned PCD for work purposes. However, all work-related documents, emails, photographs, recordings or other public records created or received on a member's personally owned PCD should be transferred to the Merced County Sheriff's Office and deleted from the member's PCD as soon as reasonably practicable but no later than the end of the member's shift.

Except with prior express authorization from their supervisor, members are not obligated or required to carry, access, monitor or respond to electronic communications using a personally owned PCD while off-duty. However, employees who are subject to on call status (Detectives, SWAT, Dive, SAR, etc) should be available consistent with the collateral on call duties.

### **702.6 USE OF PCD**

The following protocols shall apply to all PCD's that are carried while on-duty or used to conduct department business:

- (a) A PCD should be carried in a manner that is safe based on their assignment.
- (b) All PCD's in the workplace shall be set to silent or vibrate mode when appropriate. Audible ring tones may be used when appropriate as to not disturb the work place.
- (c) A PCD may not be used to conduct personal business while on-duty, except for brief personal communications (e.g., informing family of extended hours). Members shall endeavor to limit their use of PCD's to authorized break times, unless an emergency exists.
- (d) Members may use a PCD to communicate with other personnel in situations where the use of radio communications is either impracticable or not feasible. PCD's should not be used as a substitute for, as a way to avoid, or in lieu of regular radio communications.
- (e) Members are prohibited from taking pictures, audio or video recordings or making copies of any such picture or recording media unless it is directly related to official department business. Disclosure of any such information to any third party through any means, without the express authorization of the Sheriff or the authorized designee, may result in discipline.
- (f) Members will limit social networking sites while in public view.
- (g) Using PCD's to harass, threaten, coerce or otherwise engage in inappropriate conduct with any third party is prohibited. Any member having knowledge of such conduct shall promptly notify a supervisor.

### **702.7 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities of supervisors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring that members under their command are provided appropriate training on the use of PCD's consistent with this policy.

## *Personal Communication Devices*

---

- (b) Monitoring, to the extent practicable, PCD use in the workplace and taking prompt corrective action if a member is observed or reported to be improperly using a PCD.
  - 1. Improper conduct via use of any PCD may cause an administrative or criminal investigation depending on the totality of the circumstances.
  - 2. Searches of any member's personally owned device will follow established legal procedures (search warrant, consent, etc) and no investigation shall be conducted without the Sheriff's knowledge and consent.

### **702.8 USE WHILE DRIVING**

The use of a PCD while driving can adversely affect safety, cause unnecessary distractions and present a negative image to the public. Deputies operating emergency vehicles should restrict the use of these devices to matters of an urgent nature and should, where practicable, stop the vehicle at an appropriate location to use the PCD. When available, members should connect PCD's to the vehicles "Bluetooth" device/equipment.

Members who are operating department vehicles that are not authorized emergency vehicles shall not use a PCD while driving unless the device is specifically designed and configured to allow hands-free use. In an emergency, a wireless phone may be used to place an emergency call to the Department or other emergency services agency. Hands-free use should be restricted to business-related calls or calls of an urgent nature.

## Vehicle Maintenance

### 704.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Employees are responsible for assisting in maintaining Department vehicles so that they are properly equipped, properly maintained, properly refueled and present a clean appearance inside and out.

### 704.2 DEFECTIVE VEHICLES

When a department vehicle becomes inoperative or in need of repair that affects the safety of the vehicle, that vehicle shall be removed from service for repair. Proper documentation shall be promptly completed by the employee who first becomes aware of the defective condition, describing the correction needed. The paperwork shall be promptly forwarded to vehicle maintenance for repair.

#### 704.2.1 DAMAGE OR POOR PERFORMANCE

Vehicles that may have been damaged, or perform poorly shall be removed from service for inspections and repairs as soon as practicable.

#### 704.2.2 SEVERE USE

Vehicles operated under severe-use conditions, which include operations for which the vehicle is not designed or that exceed the manufacturer's parameters, should be removed from service and subjected to a safety inspection as soon as practicable. Such conditions may include rough roadway or off-road driving, hard or extended braking, pursuits or prolonged high-speed operation.

#### 704.2.3 REMOVAL OF WEAPONS

All firearms, weapons and control devices shall be removed from a vehicle and properly secured in the department armory prior to the vehicle being released for maintenance, service or repair.

### 704.3 VEHICLE EQUIPMENT

Certain items shall be maintained in all department vehicles for emergency purposes and to perform routine duties.

#### 704.3.1 PATROL VEHICLES

Deputies shall inspect the patrol vehicle at the beginning of the shift and ensure that the following equipment, at a minimum, is present in the vehicle:

- 20 Emergency road flares
- 1 Roll Crime Scene Barricade Tape
- 1 First aid kit, CPR mask
- 1 Blanket

## *Vehicle Maintenance*

---

- 1 Blood-borne pathogen kit, Incl. protective gloves
- 1 Traffic Safety Vest
- 1 Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Handbook
- 1 Evidence collection kit

### **704.3.2 UNMARKED VEHICLES**

An employee driving unmarked department vehicles shall ensure that the minimum following equipment is present in the vehicle:

- 20 Emergency road flares
- 1 Roll Crime Scene Barricade Tape
- 1 First aid kit, CPR mask
- 1 Blanket
- 1 Blood-borne pathogen kit, Incl. protective gloves
- 1 Traffic Safety Vest
- 1 Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Handbook

### **704.4 VEHICLE REFUELING**

Absent emergency conditions or supervisor approval, all deputies, at the end of their shifts, shall ensure that the vehicle he or she drove is filled with a 3/4 tank full of fuel.

### **704.5 WASHING OF VEHICLES**

All units shall be kept clean at all times and weather conditions permitting, shall be washed regularly, if not daily, to enhance their appearance.

Employees using a vehicle shall remove any trash or debris at the end of their shift. This include vacuuming the interior and wiping down the interior as necessary. Confidential material should be placed in a designated receptacle provided for the shredding of this matter.

### **704.6 CIVILIAN EMPLOYEE USE**

Employees using marked vehicles shall ensure all weapons are removed from vehicles before going into service. Employees shall not operate the emergency lights or siren of any vehicle unless expressly authorized by a sergeant who is a peace officer as defined by 830.1 PC.

## Vehicle Use

### 706.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish a system of accountability to ensure department vehicles are used appropriately. This policy provides guidelines for on- and off-duty use of department vehicles and shall not be construed to create or imply any contractual obligation by the County of Merced County Sheriff's Department to provide assigned take-home vehicles.

### 706.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office provides vehicles for department-related business and may assign patrol and unmarked vehicles based on a determination of operational efficiency, economic impact to the Department, requirements for tactical deployments and other considerations.

#### 706.2.1 SHIFT ASSIGNED VEHICLES

Personnel assigned to routine scheduled field duties shall log onto the in-car computer inputting the required information when going on duty. If the vehicle is not equipped with a working in-car computer, they shall notify Dispatch for entry of the vehicle number on the shift roster. If the employee exchanges vehicles during the shift, the new vehicle number shall be entered.

The Administrative Sergeant or designated manager shall ensure a copy of the unit roster indicating personnel assignments and vehicle numbers is completed for each shift and maintained for a minimum period of two years.

Employees shall be responsible for inspecting the interior and exterior of any assigned vehicle before taking the vehicle into service and at the conclusion of their shift. Any previously unreported damage, mechanical problems, unauthorized contents or other problems with the vehicle shall be promptly reported to a supervisor and documented as appropriate.

#### 706.2.2 UNSCHEDULED USE OF VEHICLES

Personnel utilizing a vehicle for any purpose other than their normally assigned duties shall first notify the appropriate supervisor of the reasons for use and a notation will be made on the shift roster indicating the operator's name and vehicle number. This section does not apply to personnel permanently assigned an individual vehicle (e.g., command staff, detectives), or to Evidence Room personnel assigned transportation duties to and from the maintenance yard, etc. Evidence Room personnel shall be responsible for maintaining records of the property transportation vehicles for a minimum of two years.

#### 706.2.3 UNDERCOVER VEHICLES

Unmarked units, if not assigned to an individual employee, shall not be used without first obtaining approval from the respective unit supervisor.

## *Vehicle Use*

---

### **706.2.4 DETECTIVE VEHICLES**

Investigation Division vehicle use is restricted to detective personnel unless approved by a detective supervisor. After hour use of Investigation vehicles by personnel not assigned to the Investigation Division shall be approved by the shift supervisor.

### **706.2.5 AUTHORIZED PASSENGERS**

Personnel operating department owned vehicles may permit passengers at the discretion of the Sheriff.

### **706.2.6 PARKING**

County owned vehicles should be parked in their assigned stalls. Employees shall not park privately owned vehicles in any stall assigned to a County owned vehicle or in other areas of the parking lot not designated as a parking space unless authorized by a supervisor. Privately owned motorcycles shall be parked in designated areas.

### **706.2.7 INSPECTIONS**

The interior of any vehicle that has been used to transport any person other than an employee should be inspected prior to placing another person in the vehicle and again after the person is removed. This is to ensure that unauthorized items have not been left in the vehicle.

## **706.3 ASSIGNED VEHICLE USE**

It shall be the policy of the Merced County Sheriffs' Office to provide county owned vehicles to designated employees at the direction of the Sheriff. The intent of this policy is to provide increased employee efficiency, quick emergency response, and enhanced public safety after normal work hours for investigative, tactical or rescue operations. The Sheriff has the final authority regarding vehicle use and assignment.

A. The Sheriff or his designee shall assign department employees to take a sheriff's office vehicle to their residence to provide response after their normal working hours. Sheriff's Office employees with the rank of lieutenant or higher are authorized to have a take home car due to the nature of their responsibilities.

B. Any employee who is assigned to one of the following duties may be considered for a take home car and shall submit a request form justifying the need for the vehicle assignment: 1) Detectives; 2) K-9 Handlers; 3) MAGNET 4) SRT; 5) School Resource Deputies; 6) Supervision of SWAT Tactical Operations; 7) Supervision of Dive/Rescue operations; 8) Supervision of Crisis Negotiations Team and/or Technical Support Unit; 9) SAR (Search & Rescue) Coordinator; 10) Other positions deemed essential by the Sheriff.

C. Factors to consider when assigning take home cars: 1) The type of situations the employee may be requested to respond to after hours 2) The employee's responsibility to assist in resolving, supervising or managing a critical incident.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Vehicle Use*

---

D. Employees who are assigned a take home car shall not leave firearms of other valuable department assets in the vehicle. Refer to Merced County Sheriff's Office policy manual sections regarding weapons and vehicle storage for details.

E. Employees who reside outside Merced County may take the vehicle to their residence so long as the residence location is within 20 miles of the county boundary.

F. Employees who wish to seek a take home vehicle may submit their request in writing to the Sheriff. The Sheriff is the final authority with regard to vehicle take home requests. Assigned vehicles may be changed at any time and/or permission to take home a vehicle may be withdrawn at any time.

#### 706.3.1 VEHICLES SUBJECT TO INSPECTION

All County owned vehicles are subject to inspection and or search at any time by a supervisor and no employee assigned to or operating such vehicle shall be entitled to any expectation of privacy with respect to the vehicle or its contents.

#### 706.3.2 NON-ASSIGNED VEHICLE USE

An employee who is not specifically assigned a take home vehicle may take home a county-owned vehicle only with prior approval from his/her supervisor and such approval shall be based on the following criteria:

(a) the use of the county vehicle is justified due to either the operational needs of the department or the personal needs of the employee (i.e., the employee has worked beyond his or her scheduled work shift and it would be uneconomical or impractical for either the department or the employee to utilize his/her personal vehicle to return home.

(b) Off-street parking will be permitted only if the employee's residential garage cannot accommodate the county vehicle.

(c) If parked off-street, the vehicles shall be locked.

(d) If parked off-street, all firearms and weapons shall be removed from the vehicle and be properly secured in the residence. (reference Policy Manual section 312.3.2- Storage of Firearms at Home and section 312.3.3- Department Weapons and Vehicles)

(e) The use of the county vehicle will not be permitted if the vehicle's use would negatively affect the operational needs of the department.

#### 706.3.3 KEYS

All uniformed field personnel approved to operate marked patrol vehicles shall be issued their own personal unit key as part of their initial equipment distribution upon hiring. Personnel assigned a permanent vehicle shall be issued keys for their respective vehicle. The loss of any assigned key shall be promptly reported in writing through the employee's chain of command.

## *Vehicle Use*

---

### 706.3.4 ALCOHOL

Members who have consumed alcohol are prohibited from operating any department vehicle unless it is required by the duty assignment (e.g., task force, undercover work). Regardless of assignment, members may not violate state law regarding vehicle operation while intoxicated.

### 706.3.5 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS

There shall be no modifications, additions or removal of any equipment or accessories without permission from Merced County Fleet Manager and the Sheriff's Administration.

### 706.3.6 CIVILIAN MEMBER USE

Civilian members using marked emergency vehicles shall ensure that all weapons have been removed before going into service. Civilian members shall receive permission from the on duty supervisor before driving a marked emergency vehicle. Civilian members shall not operate the emergency lights or siren of any vehicle unless expressly authorized by a supervisor.

## **706.4 UNMARKED VEHICLES**

Vehicles are assigned to various divisions and their use is restricted to the respective division and the assigned member, unless otherwise approved by a division supervisor. Any member operating an unmarked vehicle shall record vehicle usage monthly. Any use of unmarked vehicles by those who are not assigned to the division to which the vehicle is assigned shall also record the use with the unit supervisor prior to use.

## **706.5 MAINTENANCE**

- (a) Each employee is responsible for the cleanliness (exterior and interior) and overall maintenance of their assigned vehicle.
  - 1. Employees may use the wash racks at the facility or maintenance yards (Work-in-Lieu's may be used to clean vehicles, when available).
  - 2. Cleaning/maintenance supplies will be provided by the department.
- (b) Employees shall make daily inspections of their assigned vehicle for service/maintenance requirements and damage.
- (c) Supervisors shall make, at a minimum, monthly inspections of vehicles assigned to employees under their command to ensure the vehicles are being maintained in accordance with policy.
- (d) Routine maintenance and oil changes shall be done in accordance with the shop schedule. The vehicles will normally be serviced at the maintenance shop.
  - 1. When leaving a vehicle at the maintenance shop, the employee will complete a vehicle repair card explaining the service or repair, and leave it on the seat or dash.

## *Vehicle Use*

---

2. Vehicles requiring warranty service shall be taken to the nearest authorized dealer after receiving clearance from a supervisor

### **706.5.1 ACCESSORIES AND/OR MODIFICATIONS**

No modifications, additions or deletions of any equipment or accessories shall be made to the vehicle without written permission from the for the Assigned Vehicle Program manager.

### **706.6 ACCIDENT DAMAGE, ABUSE, AND MISUSE**

- (a) Any time a vehicle is involved in a traffic collision, either singularly, with another vehicle, object, or individual and, depending on the nature and level of damage, either this department or a requested outside agency of authority will investigate the cause and responsibility. The employee involved in the collision shall complete the County provided vehicle accident form. If the employee is incapable, the supervisor shall complete the form.
- (b) The involved deputy or employee shall not release any statements regarding responsibility to the other involved parties or non-authorized personnel.
- (c) Any damage to a vehicle, not caused by a traffic collision, shall be immediately reported within the shift in which the damage was discovered, documented in memorandum format and forwarded to the shift sergeant.
- (d) An administrative investigation will be conducted to determine any vehicle abuse or misuse. If it is determined that misuse or abuse was a result of negligent conduct or operation, appropriate disciplinary action may result. Any County-owned or leased vehicle involved in a collision which is driven by a department employee shall be investigated in accordance with both this policy and Policy § 502 (Traffic Collision Reporting). This investigative process will require 1) the applicable law enforcement vehicle collision investigation to determine the cause of the collision and 2) the department's administrative investigation to determine whether the collision was "Preventable" or "Non-Preventable". As such, any employee (Operations and Corrections) who is investigated per this policy is entitled to the same procedural rights and protections as in any administrative investigation.

### **706.7 TOLL ROAD USAGE**

Law enforcement vehicles are not routinely exempted from incurring toll road charges. Pursuant to the non-revenue policy of the toll roads, law enforcement agencies responding to an emergency or incident on the toll roads, while on duty, are exempt from paying the toll. Commuting, or returning to the county after an emergency does not qualify for this exemption and personnel using county-owned vehicles are subject to the toll charge. To avoid unnecessary toll road violation charges, all employees operating a county-owned vehicle upon the toll road shall adhere to the following:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Vehicle Use*

---

- (a) All employees operating a county-owned vehicle for any reason other than an initial response to an emergency shall stop and pay the appropriate toll charge. Employees may submit for reimbursement from the county for any toll fees.
- (b) All employees passing through the Toll Plaza or booth during a response to an emergency shall draft a memo to the Operations Captain within five working days explaining the circumstances.

# SECURING DEPARTMENTAL PROPERTY IN VEHICLES

## 707.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy applies to both county owned vehicles and personally owned vehicles. Employees who have departmental property inside either county owned vehicles (either marked or unmarked) or privately owned vehicles are responsible for the security of departmental property inside those vehicles. Such property is defined as that equipment which is not a permanent fixture and is capable of being portable. Such equipment includes, but is not limited to, firearms (personnel are encouraged to apply this policy to privately owned firearms and other privately-owned weapons), portable radios, computers, etc.

While on or off duty, personnel should exercise care as to not leave any unsecured potentially dangerous items in plain view of the public. While off-duty, unless the vehicle is parked inside a locked garage at the employee's residence, all such equipment shall be removed and secured inside the employee's residence. Equipment stored in the trunk area must also be secured inside the employee's residence.

The following equipment must be secured per the requirements of this policy:

1. All firearms and projectile based weapons (i.e., Taser, beanbag)
2. All defensive tactical gear (i.e., tactical/ballistic vests; helmets)
3. Uniforms and articles of uniforms which would reasonably be identified or associated with the department or law enforcement.
4. All communications devices (i.e., portable radios, cell phones)
5. All computers (laptops, tablets, etc.)
6. All incendiary devices ("Flash Bang", Tear Gas, etc.)
7. Any other potentially dangerous items or property which could potentially compromise departmental security (computers, reports, cell phones, etc.)

It is not practical to identify all the equipment which may need to be secured per this policy. However, the intent of this policy is to prevent the loss of that equipment which could be used to harm public safety or compromise departmental security.

---

## Cash Handling, Security and Management

### 708.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines to ensure department members handle cash appropriately in the performance of their duties.

This policy does not address cash-handling issues specific to the Property and Evidence and Informants policies.

### 708.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to properly handle and document cash transactions and to maintain accurate records of cash transactions in order to protect the integrity of department operations and ensure the public trust.

### 708.3 PETTY CASH FUNDS

The Sheriff shall designate a person as the fund manager responsible for maintaining and managing the petty cash fund.

Each petty cash fund requires the creation and maintenance of an accurate and current transaction ledger and the filing of invoices, receipts, cash transfer forms and expense reports by the fund manager.

### 708.4 PETTY CASH TRANSACTIONS

The fund manager shall document all transactions on the ledger and any other appropriate forms. Each person participating in the transaction shall sign or otherwise validate the ledger, attesting to the accuracy of the entry. Transactions should include the filing of an appropriate receipt, invoice or cash transfer form. Transactions that are not documented by a receipt, invoice or cash transfer form require an expense report.

### 708.5 PETTY CASH AUDITS

The fund manager shall perform an audit no less than once every six months. This audit requires that the fund manager and at least one command staff member, selected by the Sheriff, review the transaction ledger and verify the accuracy of the accounting. The fund manager and the participating member shall sign or otherwise validate the ledger attesting to the accuracy of all documentation and fund accounting. A discrepancy in the audit requires documentation by those performing the audit and an immediate reporting of the discrepancy to the Sheriff.

Transference of fund management to another member shall require a separate petty cash audit and involve a command staff member.

A separate audit of each petty cash fund should be completed on a random date, approximately once each year by the Sheriff or the County.

## *Cash Handling, Security and Management*

---

### **708.6 ROUTINE CASH HANDLING**

Those who handle cash as part of their property or STAR Team supervisor duties shall discharge those duties in accordance with the Property and Evidence and Informants policies.

Members who routinely accept payment for department services shall discharge those duties in accordance with the procedures established for those tasks.

### **708.7 OTHER CASH HANDLING**

Members of the Department who, within the course of their duties, are in possession of cash that is not their property or that is outside their defined cash-handling responsibilities shall, as soon as practicable, verify the amount, summon another member to verify their accounting, and process the cash for safekeeping or as evidence or found property, in accordance with the Property and Evidence Policy.

Cash in excess of \$1,000 requires immediate notification of a supervisor, special handling, verification and accounting by the supervisor. Each member involved in this process shall complete an appropriate report or record entry.

# Personal Protective Equipment

## 709.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy identifies the different types of personal protective equipment (PPE) provided by the Department as well the requirements and guidelines for the use of PPE.

This policy does not address ballistic vests or protection from communicable disease, as those issues are addressed in the Body Armor and Communicable Diseases policies.

### 709.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Personal protective equipment (PPE)** - Equipment that protects a person from serious workplace injuries or illnesses resulting from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical or other workplace hazards.

**Respiratory PPE** - Any device that is worn by the user to protect from exposure to atmospheres where there is smoke, low levels of oxygen, high levels of carbon monoxide, or the presence of toxic gases or other respiratory hazards. For purposes of this policy, respiratory PPE does not include particulate-filtering masks such as N95 or N100 masks.

## 709.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office endeavors to protect members by supplying certain PPE to members as provided in this policy.

## 709.3 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITIES

Members are required to use PPE as provided in this policy and pursuant to their training.

Members are responsible for proper maintenance and storage of issued PPE. PPE should be stored in an appropriate location so that it is available when needed.

Any member who identifies hazards in the workplace is encouraged to utilize the procedures in the Illness and Injury Prevention Policy to recommend new or improved PPE or additional needs for PPE.

## 709.4 HEARING PROTECTION

Approved hearing protection shall be used by members during firearms training.

Hearing protection shall meet or exceed the requirements provided in 8 CCR 5098.

## 709.5 EYE PROTECTION

Approved eye protection, including side protection, shall be used by members during firearms training. Eye protection for members who wear prescription lenses shall incorporate the prescription (e.g., eye protection that can be worn over prescription lenses). Members shall ensure their eye protection does not interfere with the fit of their hearing protection.

## *Personal Protective Equipment*

---

The Rangemaster shall ensure eye protection meets or exceeds the requirements provided in 8 CCR 3382.

### **709.6 HEAD AND BODY PROTECTION**

Members who make arrests or control crowds should be provided ballistic head protection with an attachable face shield.

Padded body protection consisting of chest, arm, leg and groin protection should be provided as required by any collective bargaining agreement.

### **709.7 RESPIRATORY PROTECTION**

The Area Lieutenants are responsible for ensuring a respiratory protection plan is developed and maintained by a trained and qualified member. The plan shall include procedures for (8 CCR 5144):

- (a) Selecting appropriate respiratory PPE based on hazards and risks associated with functions or positions.
- (b) Fit testing, including identification of members or contractors qualified to conduct fit testing.
- (c) Medical evaluations.
- (d) PPE inventory control.
- (e) PPE issuance and replacement.
- (f) Cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, repairing, discarding and otherwise maintaining respiratory PPE, including schedules for these activities.
- (g) Regularly reviewing the PPE plan.
- (h) Remaining current with applicable National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), American National Standards Institute (ANSI), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protective Agency (EPA) and state PPE standards and guidelines.

#### **709.7.1 RESPIRATORY PROTECTION USE**

Designated members may be issued respiratory PPE based on the member's assignment (e.g., a narcotics investigator who is involved in clandestine lab investigations).

Respiratory PPE may be worn when authorized by a scene commander who will determine the type and level of protection appropriate at a scene based upon an evaluation of the hazards present.

Scene commanders are responsible for monitoring members using respiratory PPE and their degree of exposure or stress. When there is a change in work area conditions or when a member's degree of exposure or stress may affect respirator effectiveness, the scene commander shall reevaluate the continued effectiveness of the respirator and direct the member to leave the respirator use area when the scene commander reasonably believes (8 CCR 5144):

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personal Protective Equipment*

---

- (a) It is necessary for the member to wash his/her face and the respirator face piece to prevent eye or skin irritation associated with respirator use.
- (b) The member detects vapor or gas breakthrough, or there is a change in breathing resistance or leakage of the face piece.
- (c) The member needs to replace the respirator, filter, cartridge or canister.

#### 709.7.2 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR RESPIRATORY PROTECTION

Members shall not use self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA), full-face respirators or cartridge respirators unless they have completed training requirements for the equipment.

Members exposed to environments that are reasonably known to be harmful due to gases, smoke or vapors shall use respiratory PPE.

Members using respiratory PPE shall (8 CCR 5144):

- (a) Ensure that they have no facial hair between the sealing surface of the face piece and the face that could interfere with the seal or the valve function. Members also shall ensure that they have no other condition that will interfere with the face-to-facepiece seal or the valve function.
- (b) Not wear corrective glasses, goggles or other PPE that interferes with the seal of the face piece to the face, or that has not been previously tested for use with that respiratory equipment.
- (c) Perform a user seal check per department-approved procedures recommended by the respirator manufacturer each time they put on a tight-fitting respirator.
- (d) Leave a respiratory use area whenever they detect vapor or gas breakthrough, changes in breathing resistance or leakage of their facepiece and ensure that the respirator is replaced or repaired before returning to the affected area.

#### 709.7.3 GAS MASK

Full-face air-purifying respirators, commonly referred to as gas masks, may be fitted with mechanical pre-filters or combination cartridge/filter assemblies for use in areas where gases, vapors, dusts, fumes or mists are present. Members must identify and use the correct cartridge based on the circumstances (8 CCR 5144).

A scene commander may order the use of gas masks in situations where the use of a SCBA is not necessary. These incidents may include areas where tear gas has or will be used or where a vegetation fire is burning. Gas masks shall not be used if there is a potential for an oxygen-deficient atmosphere.

Members shall ensure their gas mask filters are replaced whenever:

- (a) They smell, taste or are irritated by a contaminant.
- (b) They experience difficulty breathing due to filter loading.
- (c) The cartridges or filters become wet.
- (d) The expiration date on the cartridges or canisters has been reached.

## *Personal Protective Equipment*

---

### **709.7.4 SELF-CONTAINED BREATHING APPARATUS**

Scene commanders may direct members to use SCBA when entering an atmosphere that may pose an immediate threat to life, would cause irreversible adverse health effects or would impair an individual's ability to escape from a dangerous atmosphere. These situations may include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Entering the hot zone of a hazardous materials incident.
- (b) Entering any area where contaminant levels may become unsafe without warning, or any situation where exposures cannot be identified or reasonably estimated.
- (c) Entering a smoke- or chemical-filled area.

The use of SCBA should not cease until approved by a scene commander.

### **709.7.5 RESPIRATOR FIT TESTING**

No member shall be issued respiratory PPE until a proper fit testing has been completed by a designated member or contractor (8 CCR 5144).

After initial testing, fit testing for respiratory PPE shall be repeated (8 CCR 5144):

- (a) At least once every 12 months.
- (b) Whenever there are changes in the type of SCBA or facepiece used.
- (c) Whenever there are significant physical changes in the user (e.g., obvious change in body weight, scarring of the face seal area, dental changes, cosmetic surgery or any other condition that may affect the fit of the facepiece seal).

All respirator fit testing shall be conducted in negative-pressure mode.

### **709.7.6 RESPIRATORY MEDICAL EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE**

No member shall be issued respiratory protection that forms a complete seal around the face until (8 CCR 5144):

- (a) The member has completed a medical evaluation that includes a medical evaluation questionnaire.
- (b) A physician or other licensed health care professional has reviewed the questionnaire.
- (c) The member has completed any physical examination recommended by the reviewing physician or health care professional.

### **709.8 RECORDS**

The Training Manager is responsible for maintaining records of all:

- (a) PPE training.
- (b) Initial fit testing for respiratory protection equipment.
- (c) Annual fit testing.
- (d) Respirator medical evaluation questionnaires and any subsequent physical examination results.

## *Personal Protective Equipment*

---

1. These records shall be maintained in a separate confidential medical file.

The records shall be maintained in accordance with the department records retention schedule and 8 CCR 5144.

### **709.9 TRAINING**

Members should be trained in the respiratory and other hazards to which they may be potentially exposed during routine and emergency situations.

All members shall be trained in the proper use and maintenance of PPE issued to them, including when the use is appropriate; how to put on, remove and adjust PPE; how to care for the PPE; and the limitations (8 CCR 3380).

Members issued respiratory PPE shall attend annual training on the proper use of respiratory protection devices (8 CCR 5144).

## **Chapter 8 - Support Services**

# Dispatch Operations

## 800.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the basic functions of Dispatch. It addresses the immediate information needs of the Department in the course of its normal daily activities and during emergencies.

## 800.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to provide 24-hour telephone service to the public for information and for routine or emergency assistance. The Department provides two-way radio capability providing continuous communication between Dispatch and department members in the field.

## 800.3 DISPATCH SECURITY

The communications function is vital and central to all emergency service operations. The safety and security of Dispatch, its members and its equipment must be a high priority. Special security procedures should be established in a separate operations manual for Dispatch.

Access to Dispatch shall be limited to members, Command Staff, Sergeants, and department members with a specific business-related purpose.

### 800.3.1 DEPUTY IDENTIFICATION

Identification systems are based on factors such as beat assignment and deputy identification numbers. Employees should use the entire call sign when initiating communication with the dispatcher. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the dispatcher can acknowledge the appropriate unit. Employees initiating communication with other agencies shall use their entire call sign. This requirement does not apply to continuing conversation between the mobile unit and dispatcher once the mobile unit has been properly identified.

### 800.3.2 CALL SIGN SHIFT IDENTIFIERS

The following beat numbers shall serve for their corresponding areas:

Beat 1 Planada/Le Grand

Beat 2 Snelling/Lake Yosemite Area

Beat 3 Merced/Beachwood/El Nido

Beat 4 Atwater/Winton/Cressey

Beat 5 Livingston/Delhi/Ballico

Beat 6 Hilmar/Stevinson

Beat 7 Santa Nella/Gustine

Beat 8 Los Banos

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Dispatch Operations*

---

Beat 9 Dos Palos/Dos Palos Y/South Dos Palos

The following listed phonetic letter call signs shall serve as shift identifiers: "Delta" Day shift "Echo" Swing shift "Kilo" Midnight shift

Patrol Deputies shall identify themselves to dispatch in the following format:

Beat, Shift, Individual Deputy ID - Last Two Numbers of their 4 digit call sign. Example: A deputy working Day shift beat 4 would be "4-Delta-XX".

Roving units will identify themselves by the station they are assigned coupled with "Robert". Example: A deputy working out of the Los Banos Station would be "8-Robert-XX". Roving units do not need to identify which shift they are assigned unless they become assigned to a beat at some point during their shift.

### **800.4 RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **800.4.1 COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER - OPERATIONS LIEUTENANT**

The Sheriff shall designate an Operations Lieutenant as the Communications Division Manager.

The Communications Lieutenant will coordinate dispatch responsibilities/activities with a designated Operations Communications Sergeant.

The designated Operations Communication Sergeant will supervise and direct the responsibilities and activities of the Supervising Dispatcher.

The responsibilities of the Supervising Dispatcher include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Coordinate the below responsibilities with the approval of the Communications Sergeant.
- (b) Overseeing the efficient and effective operation of Dispatch in coordination with other supervisors.
- (c) Scheduling and maintaining dispatcher time records.
- (d) Supervising, training and evaluating dispatchers.
- (e) Ensuring the radio and telephone recording system is operational.
  - 1. Recordings shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as required by law.
- (f) Processing requests for copies of Dispatch information for release.
- (g) Maintaining Dispatch database systems.
- (h) Maintaining and updating Dispatch procedures manual.
  - 1. Procedures for specific types of crime reports may be necessary. For example, specific questions and instructions may be necessary when talking with a victim of a sexual assault to ensure that his/her health and safety needs are met, as well as steps that he/she may take to preserve evidence.
  - 2. Ensuring dispatcher compliance with established policies and procedures.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Dispatch Operations*

---

- (i) Handling internal and external inquiries regarding services provided and accepting personnel complaints in accordance with the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (j) Maintaining a current contact list of County personnel to be notified in the event of a utility service emergency.

#### 800.4.2 ADDITIONAL PROCEDURES

The Supervising Dispatcher should establish procedures for:

- (a) Recording all telephone and radio communications and playback issues.
- (b) Storage and retention of recordings.
- (c) Security of audio recordings (e.g., passwords, limited access, authorized reviewers, preservation of recordings past normal retention standards).
- (d) Availability of current information for dispatchers (e.g., Patrol Lieutenant contact, rosters, member tracking methods, member contact, maps, emergency providers, tactical dispatch plans).
- (e) Assignment of field members and safety check intervals.
- (f) Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) instructions.
- (g) Procurement of external services (e.g., fire suppression, ambulances, aircraft, tow trucks, taxis).
- (h) Protection of essential equipment (e.g., surge protectors, gaseous fire suppression systems, uninterruptible power systems, generators).
- (i) Protection of radio transmission lines, antennas and power sources for Dispatch (e.g., security cameras, fences).
- (j) Handling misdirected, silent and hang-up calls.
- (k) Handling private security alarms, if applicable.
- (l) Radio interoperability issues.

#### 800.4.3 DISPATCHERS

Dispatchers report to the Supervising Dispatcher. The responsibilities of the dispatcher include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Receiving and handling all incoming and transmitted communications, including:
  - 1. Emergency 9-1-1 lines.
  - 2. Business telephone lines.
  - 3. Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD)/Text Telephone (TTY) equipment.
  - 4. Radio communications with department members in the field and support resources (e.g., fire department, emergency medical services (EMS), allied agency law enforcement units).

## *Dispatch Operations*

---

5. Other electronic sources of information (e.g., text messages, digital photographs, video).
- (b) Documenting the field activities of department members and support resources (e.g., fire department, EMS, allied agency law enforcement units).
- (c) Inquiry and entry of information through Dispatch, department and other law enforcement database systems (CLETS, DMV, NCIC).
- (d) Monitoring department video surveillance systems.
- (e) Maintaining the current status of members in the field, their locations and the nature of calls for service.
- (f) Notifying the on duty sergeant/field supervisor of emergency activity, including, but not limited to:
  1. Vehicle pursuits.
  2. Foot pursuits.
  3. Assignment of emergency response.

### **800.5 CALL HANDLING**

This Department provides members of the public with access to the 9-1-1 system for a single emergency telephone number.

When a call for services is received, the dispatcher will reasonably and quickly attempt to determine whether the call is an emergency or non-emergency, and shall quickly ascertain the call type, location and priority by asking four key questions:

- Where?
- What?
- When?
- Who?

If the dispatcher determines that the caller has a hearing and/or speech impairment or disability, he/she shall immediately initiate a connection with the individual via available TDD/TTY equipment or Telephone Relay Service (TRS), as mandated by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

If the dispatcher determines that the caller is a limited English proficiency (LEP) individual, the dispatcher should quickly determine whether sufficient information can be obtained to initiate an appropriate response. If language assistance is still needed, the language is known and a language-appropriate authorized interpreter is available in Dispatch, the dispatcher should immediately connect the LEP caller to the authorized interpreter.

If no authorized interpreter is available or the dispatcher is unable to identify the caller's language, the dispatcher will contact the contracted telephonic interpretation service and establish a three-party call connecting the dispatcher, the LEP individual and the interpreter.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Dispatch Operations*

---

Dispatchers should be courteous, patient and respectful when dealing with the public.

#### **800.5.1 EMERGENCY CALLS**

A call is considered an emergency when there is an immediate or potential threat to life or serious property damage, and the timely arrival of public safety assistance is of the utmost importance. A person reporting an emergency should not be placed on hold until the dispatcher has obtained all necessary information to ensure the safety of the responding department members and affected individuals.

Emergency calls should be dispatched immediately. The on duty sergeant/field supervisor shall be notified of pending emergency calls for service when department members are unavailable for dispatch.

#### **800.5.2 NON-EMERGENCY CALLS**

A call is considered a non-emergency call when there is no immediate or potential threat to life or property. A person reporting a non-emergency may be placed on hold, if necessary, to allow the dispatcher to handle a higher priority or emergency call.

The reporting person should be advised if there will be a delay in the dispatcher returning to the telephone line or when there will be a delay in the response for service.

### **800.6 RADIO COMMUNICATIONS**

The sheriff's radio system is for official use only, to be used by dispatchers to communicate with department members in the field. All transmissions shall be professional and made in a calm, businesslike manner, using proper language and correct procedures. Such transmissions shall include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Members acknowledging the dispatcher with their radio identification call signs and current location.
- (b) Dispatchers acknowledging and responding promptly to all radio transmissions.
- (c) Members keeping the dispatcher advised of their status and location.
- (d) Member and dispatcher acknowledgements shall be concise and without further comment unless additional information is needed.

The Operations Communication Sergeant and the Supervising Dispatcher shall be notified of radio procedure violations or other causes for complaint. All complaints and violations will be investigated and reported to the complainant's supervisor and processed through the chain of command.

#### **800.6.1 FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION COMPLIANCE**

Merced County Sheriff's Office radio operations shall be conducted in accordance with Federal Communications Commission (FCC) procedures and requirements.

## *Dispatch Operations*

---

### **800.6.2 RADIO IDENTIFICATION**

Radio call signs are assigned to department members based on factors such as duty assignment, uniformed patrol assignment and/or member identification number. Dispatchers shall identify themselves on the radio with the appropriate station name or number, and identify the department member by his/her call sign. Members should use their call signs when initiating communication with the dispatcher. The use of the call sign allows for a brief pause so that the dispatcher can acknowledge the appropriate department member. Members initiating communication with other law enforcement or support agencies shall use their entire radio call sign, which includes the department station name or number.

### **800.7 DOCUMENTATION**

It shall be the responsibility of Dispatch to document all relevant information on calls for service or self-initiated activity. Dispatchers shall attempt to elicit, document and relay as much information as possible to enhance the safety of the member and assist in anticipating conditions that may be encountered at the scene. Desirable information would include, at a minimum:

- Incident and/or case number.
- Date and time of request.
- Name and address of the reporting person, if possible.
- Type of incident reported.
- Involvement of weapons, drugs and/or alcohol.
- Location of incident reported.
- Identification of members assigned as primary and backup.
- Time of dispatch.
- Time of the responding member's arrival.
- Time of member's return to service.
- Disposition or status of reported incident.

### **800.8 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Information that becomes available through Dispatch may be confidential or sensitive in nature. All members of Dispatch shall treat information that becomes known to them as confidential and release that information in accordance with the Protected Information Policy.

Automated data, such as Department of Motor Vehicle records, warrants, criminal history information, records of internal sheriff's files or medical information, shall only be made available to authorized law enforcement personnel. Prior to transmitting confidential information via the radio, an admonishment shall be made that confidential information is about to be broadcast.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Dispatch Operations*

---

### **800.9 TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION**

Dispatchers shall receive training consistent with minimum standards established by POST (Penal Code § 13510).

## Property and Evidence

### 802.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides for the proper collection, storage, and security of evidence and other property. Additionally, this policy provides for the protection of the chain of evidence and those persons authorized to remove and/or destroy property. The Property Room is placed organizationally in the Sheriff's Investigations Division which includes supervision of assigned property and evidence technicians.

### 802.2 DEFINITIONS

**Property** - Includes all items of evidence, items taken for safekeeping and found property.

**New World System (Aegis)-Property Room Screen** - an automated property and evidence tracking system that records the location, purpose and disposition of items.

**Evidence** - [Includes items taken or recovered in the course of an investigation that may be used in the prosecution of a case. This includes photographs and latent fingerprints.](#)

**Safekeeping** - Includes the following types of property:

- Property obtained by the Department for safekeeping such as a firearm
- Personal property of an arrestee not taken as evidence
- Property taken for safekeeping under authority of a law (e.g., Welfare and Institutions Code § 5150 (mentally ill persons))
- 

**Found Property** - Includes property found by an employee or citizen that has no apparent evidentiary value and where the owner cannot be readily identified or contacted.

### 802.3 PROPERTY HANDLING

Any employee who first comes into possession of any property, shall retain such property in his/her possession until it is properly tagged and placed in the designated property locker or storage room along with the property form. Care shall be taken to maintain the chain of custody for all evidence. Employees who come into possession of evidence shall log the evidence as soon as possible.

Where ownership can be established as to found property with no apparent evidentiary value, such property may be released to the owner without the need for booking. The property form must be completed to document the release of property not booked and the owner shall sign the form acknowledging receipt of the item(s).

#### 802.3.1 PROPERTY BOOKING PROCEDURE

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Property and Evidence*

---

On a daily basis for the Main Office and Investigations Office, the property technician shall check and remove items from all property lockers/rooms for property and evidence submitted. The substations will be checked weekly for property and evidence collection. The jails will be checked upon notification from the correctional sergeants. All property must be logged and placed in an evidence locker/room prior to the employee going off-duty unless otherwise approved by a supervisor. Property submitted through all offices (with the exception of investigations and coroner's division due to direct evidence entry into Aegis) must first be logged in the property book prior to placing the items in the locker. Employees logging property shall observe the following guidelines:

(a) All evidence that is collected or seized shall be marked for identification and packaged to avoid contamination and to ensure the integrity of the evidence.

(b) Each item of evidence must be individually packaged with the following example format in black/blue marker on the package or property tag.

- Case Number (12-00001)
- Crime Classification (459PC)
- Deputy/Officer Name and ID number (Jones #5103)
- Date (01/01/12)
- Item Number (#1-01)
- Description of the item (Glock 22 .40 caliber pistol w/serial number)

(c) When unable to mark the exhibit itself, such as in the case of stains, hair, blood, controlled substances, etc., place the item in a suitable package, then seal and mark the package.

(d) Complete the property form in black or blue ink, printing firm enough to read the back form. This form must be completed in full which entails the Case Number, check Property From Indication listing the name of suspect, victim, owner, or reporting official, and address, city, state and zip of the subject; the employee shall list their Name and ID number, and specific charges(s); date, and indicate whether the items can be released. Indicate whether the property was taken as evidence, recovered, safekeeping, found or other. List the Report Number and Item Number which means the first number on the evidence form is the report number and the second number is the order it was collected, together the two numbers make the evidence item number. Describe the property by make, model, serial number, color, etc. or list where the CD of photos or interview is from.

(e) All packaged items must be sealed with evidence tape to include deputy initials and date.

(f) The top property blue form shall be submitted with the case report. The remaining copies shall be attached with the property in the temporary property lockers/room until the property technicians can collect the evidence.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Property and Evidence*

---

(g) When the property is too large to be placed in a locker, the item may be retained on the floor inside the evidence room. All items placed outside of the lockers shall be marked with a property toe tag listing the case number, date, charge and item number.

#### 802.3.2 NARCOTICS AND DANGEROUS DRUGS

All narcotics and dangerous drugs shall be booked separately using a separate property record. Paraphernalia as defined by Health and Safety Code § 11364 shall also be booked separately.

The deputy seizing the narcotics and dangerous drugs shall place them in the designated locker accompanied by two copies of the form for the Records Division and detectives. The remaining copy will be detached and submitted with the case report.

#### 802.3.3 EXPLOSIVES

Deputies who encounter a suspected explosive device shall promptly notify their immediate supervisor or the Patrol Lieutenant. The bomb squad will be called to handle explosive-related incidents and will be responsible for the handling, storage, sampling and disposal of all suspected explosives.

Explosives will not be retained in the sheriff's facility. Only fireworks that are considered stable and safe and road flares or similar signaling devices may be booked into property. All such items shall be stored in proper containers and in an area designated for the storage of flammable materials. The property and evidence technician is responsible for transporting to the Fire Department, on a regular basis, any fireworks or signaling devices that are not retained as evidence.

#### 802.3.4 EXCEPTIONAL HANDLING

Certain property items require a separate process. The following items shall be processed in the described manner:

- (a) Bodily fluids such as blood or semen stains shall be air dried prior to booking
- (b) License plates found not to be stolen or connected with a known crime, should be released directly to the property and evidence technician, or placed in the designated container for return to the Department of Motor Vehicles. No formal property booking process is required
- (c) All bicycles and bicycle frames require a property record. Property tags will be securely attached to each bicycle or bicycle frame. The property may be released directly to the property and evidence technician, or placed in the bicycle storage area until a property and evidence technician can log the property
- (d) All cash shall be counted in the presence of a supervisor and the envelope initialed by the booking deputy and the supervisor.
- (e) Vehicles shall only be logged into evidence when they have evidentiary value to a criminal investigation. Vehicles that are associated with a coroner's investigation may

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Property and Evidence*

---

be stored under as evidence. Vehicles stored as evidence under this policy must have prior supervisory approval.

County property, unless connected to a known criminal case, should be released directly to the appropriate County department. No formal booking is required. In cases where no responsible person can be located, the property should be booked for safekeeping in the normal manner.

#### **802.3.5 RELINQUISHED FIREARMS**

Individuals who relinquish firearms pursuant to the provisions of Penal Code § 29850 shall be issued a receipt that describes the firearm, the serial number or other identification of the firearm at the time of relinquishment (Penal Code § 29810).

Relinquished firearms shall be retained for 30 days, after which time they may be destroyed, retained, sold or otherwise transferred, unless (Penal Code § 29810):

- (a) A certificate is issued by a judge of a court of record or the District Attorney stating the firearms shall be retained; or
- (b) The convicted person provides written notice of an intent to appeal the conviction that necessitated the relinquishment; or
- (c) The Automated Firearms System indicates that the firearm was reported lost or stolen.
  - 1. In such event, the firearm shall be restored to the lawful owner as soon as it is no longer needed as evidence, the lawful owner has identified the weapon and provided proof of ownership, and the [Department/Office] has complied with the requirements of Penal Code § 33850 et seq.

The property and evidence technician shall ensure the Records Supervisor is notified of the relinquished firearm for purposes of updating the Automated Firearms System and the disposition of the firearm for purposes of notifying the California Department of Justice (DOJ) (See the Records Division Policy).

#### **802.4 PACKAGING OF PROPERTY**

Certain items require special consideration and shall be booked separately as follows:

- (a) Narcotics and dangerous drugs
- (b) Firearms (ensure they are unloaded and booked separately from ammunition)
- (c) Property with more than one known owner
- (d) Paraphernalia as described in Health & Safety Code § 11364
- (e) Fireworks
- (f) Contraband
- (g) Currency (all denominations)

## *Property and Evidence*

---

### **802.4.1 PACKAGING CONTAINER**

Employees shall package all property, except narcotics and dangerous drugs in a suitable container available for its size. Knife boxes should be used to package knives, and syringe tubes should be used to package syringes and needles.

A property tag shall be securely attached to the outside of all items or group of items packaged together.

### **802.5 RECORDING OF PROPERTY**

All property submitted into evidence by the deputies/officers shall be transported to the Property and Evidence Room for recording and tracking of items by the property technicians. The property technician receiving custody of evidence or property shall log each case number assigned to the submitted evidence into NWS Aegis. Each item will be bar coded to signify case information and location. Any changes in the location of property held by the department shall be noted on the property form and changed in NWS Aegis.

### **802.6 PROPERTY CONTROL**

Each time the property and evidence technician receives property or releases property to another person, he/she shall enter this information into Aegis chain of custody. Deputies/Officers desiring property for court shall contact the property and evidence technician at least one day prior to the court day.

#### **802.6.1 RESPONSIBILITY OF OTHER PERSONNEL**

Every time property is released or received, an appropriate entry on the evidence package shall be completed to maintain the chain of evidence. No property or evidence is to be released without first receiving written authorization from a supervisor or detective.

Request for analysis for items other than narcotics or drugs shall be completed on the appropriate forms and submitted to the property and evidence technician. This request may be filled out any time after booking of the property or evidence.

#### **802.6.2 TRANSFER OF EVIDENCE TO CRIME LABORATORY**

The property and evidence technicians transporting the evidence out of property will insure the property is prepared for transport with accompanied forms. The detective submitting the property shall complete the DOJ Physical Evidence Submission Form for laboratory analysis. The lab forms will be transported with the property to the examining laboratory. After property return from the lab, the lab form and results shall be scanned and imported into Aegis against the property item submitted by the property and evidence technician.

#### **802.6.3 STATUS OF PROPERTY**

Each person receiving property will make the appropriate entry to document the chain of custody. Temporary release of property to deputies for investigative purposes, or for court, shall be noted into Aegis chain of custody, stating the date, time and to whom released.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Property and Evidence*

---

The property and evidence technician shall obtain the signature of the person to whom property is released, and the reason for release. Any employee receiving property shall be responsible for such property until it is properly returned to property or properly released to another authorized person or entity.

The return of the property should be recorded into Aegis chain of custody, indicating the date and the person who returned the property.

Property or evidence shall not be secured or stored in personal lockers, files or desks. Every effort should be made to secure evidence in a property locker/room. Requests for evidence from a property control clerk by an investigator shall be under the investigators direct control. At the close of business, the investigator shall log the property into detective evidence and note this entry into Aegis property chain of custody.

### 802.6.4 AUTHORITY TO RELEASE PROPERTY

The public may request return of property taken, seized or recovered by the department. Persons requesting return of property shall contact the District Attorney's Office for a Property Release Request. After review by the DA, the approved/disapproved request will be faxed to the property room for possible return of property. If the DA's office approves the release of property, the final decision to release the property shall be made by the appropriate detective.

Whenever a firearm is taken as evidence, found property or safekeeping and the person is requesting return of the firearm, they must obtain a Law Enforcement Gun Application to receive clearance from DOJ. If the firearm is not registered to the person, then a Firearm Ownership Record will have to be completed and mailed to DOJ. Once the clearance is received from DOJ, then the firearm will be released to the registered owner by the property technician.

All reasonable attempts shall be made to identify the rightful owner of found property or evidence not needed for an investigation.

With the exception of firearms and other property specifically regulated by statute, found property and property held for safekeeping shall be held for a minimum of 90 days. During such period, property technicians shall attempt to contact the rightful owner by telephone and/or mail when sufficient identifying information is available. Property not held for any other purpose and not claimed within 90 days after notification will be transferred to possible departmental use by court order, or to County Public Surplus as items no longer useful to the department. If such property is not determined useful, then it may therefore be destroyed. The final disposition of all such property shall be fully documented on the Property Form and in the Master Log Book.

Under no circumstances will an employee of the department give out the location of the property room. The phone number to the property room may be released for property release information. Property releases are by appointment only.

The final disposition of all such property shall be fully documented on the Property Form, Aegis and Master Log Book. Property not held for any other purpose and not claimed within 90 days after notification (or receipt, if notification is not feasible) will be transferred to Merced County Public

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Property and Evidence*

---

Surplus for auction. The final disposition of all such property shall be fully documented in related reports. A property and evidence technician shall release the property upon proper identification being presented by the owner for which an authorized release has been received. A signature of the person receiving the property shall be recorded on the original property form and Aegis. After release of all property entered on the property control card, the card shall be scanned for filing with the case. If some items of property have not been released the property card will remain with the Evidence Room. Upon release, the proper entry shall be documented in the appropriate manner.

### 802.6.5 RELEASE OF PROPERTY

All reasonable attempts shall be made to identify the rightful owner of found property or evidence not needed for an investigation.

Release of property shall be made upon receipt of an authorized release form, listing the name and address of the person to whom the property is to be released. The release authorization shall be signed by the authorizing supervisor or detective and must conform to the items listed on the property form or must specify the specific item(s) to be released. Release of all property shall be documented on the property form.

With the exception of firearms and other property specifically regulated by statute, found property and property held for safekeeping shall be held for a minimum of 90 days. During such period, property personnel shall attempt to contact the rightful owner by telephone and/or mail when sufficient identifying information is available. Property not held for any other purpose and not claimed within 90 days after notification (or receipt, if notification is not feasible) may be auctioned to the highest bidder at a properly published public auction. If such property is not sold at auction or otherwise lawfully claimed, it may thereafter be destroyed (Civil Code § 2080.6). The final disposition of all such property shall be fully documented in related reports.

A property and evidence technician shall release the property upon proper identification being presented by the owner for which an authorized release has been received. A signature of the person receiving the property shall be recorded on the original property form. After release of all property entered on the property control card, the card shall be forwarded to the Records Division for filing with the case. If some items of property have not been released the property card will remain with the Evidence Room. Upon release, the proper entry shall be documented in the Property Log.

Under no circumstances shall any firearm be returned to any individual unless and until such person presents valid identification and written notification from the California Department of Justice that conforms to the provisions of Penal Code § 33865.

The Evidence Room Supervisor should also make reasonable efforts to determine whether the person is the subject of any court order preventing the person from possessing a firearm and if so, the firearm should not be released to the person while the order is in effect.

The [Department/Office] is not required to retain any firearm or other deadly weapon longer than 180 days after notice has been provided to the owner that such firearm or other deadly weapon is

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Property and Evidence*

---

available for return. At the expiration of such period, the firearm or other deadly weapon may be processed for disposal in accordance with applicable law (Penal Code § 33875).

#### 802.6.6 DISPUTED CLAIMS TO PROPERTY

Occasionally more than one party may claim an interest in property being held by the [Department/Office], and the legal rights of the parties cannot be clearly established. Such property shall not be released until one party has obtained a valid court order or other undisputed right to the involved property.

All parties should be advised that their claims are civil and in extreme situations, legal counsel for the [Department/Office] may wish to file an interpleader to resolve the disputed claim (Code of Civil Procedure § 386(b)).

#### 802.6.7 RELEASE OF FIREARM IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE MATTERS

Within five days of the expiration of a restraining order issued in a domestic violence matter that required the relinquishment of a firearm, the property and evidence technician shall return the weapon to the owner if the requirements of Penal Code § 33850 and Penal Code § 33855 are met unless the firearm is determined to be stolen, evidence in a criminal investigation or the individual is otherwise prohibited from possessing a firearm (Family Code § 6389(g); Penal Code § 33855).

#### 802.6.8 RELEASE OF FIREARMS IN GUN VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDER MATTERS

Firearms and ammunition that were taken into temporary custody or surrendered pursuant to a gun violence restraining order shall be returned to the restrained person upon the expiration of the order and in accordance with the requirements of Penal Code § 33850 et seq. (Penal Code § 18120).

If the restrained person who owns the firearms or ammunition does not wish to have the firearm or ammunition returned, he/she is entitled to sell or transfer title to a licensed dealer, provided that the firearms or ammunition are legal to own or possess and the restrained person has right to title of the firearms or ammunition (Penal Code § 18120).

If a person other than the restrained person claims title to the firearms or ammunition surrendered pursuant to Penal Code § 18120 and the Merced County Sheriff's Office determines him/her to be the lawful owner, the firearms or ammunition shall be returned in accordance with the requirements of Penal Code § 33850 et seq. (Penal Code § 18120).

Firearms and ammunition that are not claimed are subject to the requirements of Penal Code § 34000.

#### 802.6.9 RELEASE OF FIREARMS AND WEAPONS IN MENTAL ILLNESS MATTERS

Firearms and other deadly weapons confiscated from an individual detained for an evaluation by a mental health professional or subject to the provisions of Welfare and Institutions Code § 8100 or Welfare and Institutions Code § 8103 shall be released or disposed of as follows:

- (a) If a petition for a hearing regarding the return of the weapon has been initiated pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(c), the weapon shall be released or disposed

## *Property and Evidence*

---

of as provided by an order of the court. If the court orders a firearm returned, the firearm shall not be returned unless and until the person presents valid identification and written notification from the California Department of Justice (DOJ) which conforms to the provisions of Penal Code § 33865.

- (b) If no petition has been initiated pursuant to Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102(c) and the weapon is not retained as evidence, the [Department/Office] shall make the weapon available for return. No firearm will be returned unless and until the person presents valid identification and written notification from the California DOJ which conforms to the provisions of Penal Code § 33865.
- (c) Unless the person contacts the [Department/Office] to facilitate the sale or transfer of the firearm to a licensed dealer pursuant to Penal Code § 33870, firearms not returned should be sold, transferred, destroyed or retained as provided in Welfare and Institutions Code § 8102.

### **802.7 DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY**

All property not held for evidence in a pending criminal investigation or proceeding, and held for six months or longer where the owner has not been located or fails to claim the property, may be disposed of in compliance with existing laws upon receipt of proper authorization for disposal. The property and evidence technician shall request a disposition or status on all property which has been held in excess of 120 days, and for which no disposition has been received from a supervisor or detective.

#### **802.7.1 EXCEPTIONAL DISPOSITIONS**

The following types of property shall be destroyed or disposed of in the manner, and at the time prescribed by law, unless a different disposition is ordered by a court of competent jurisdiction:

- Weapons declared by law to be nuisances (Penal Code § 29300; Penal Code § 18010; Penal Code § 32750)
- Animals, birds, and related equipment that have been ordered forfeited by the court (Penal Code § 599a)
- Counterfeiting equipment (Penal Code § 480)
- Gaming devices (Penal Code § 335a)
- Obscene matter ordered to be destroyed by the court (Penal Code § 312)
- Altered vehicles or component parts (Vehicle Code § 10751)
- Narcotics (Health and Safety Code § 11474 et seq.)
- Unclaimed, stolen or embezzled property (Penal Code § 1411)
- Destructive devices (Penal Code § 19000)
- Sexual assault evidence (Penal Code § 680(e))

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Property and Evidence*

---

#### 802.7.2 UNCLAIMED MONEY

If found or seized money is no longer required as evidence and remains unclaimed after three years, the [Department/Office] shall cause a notice to be published each week for a period of two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper of general circulation (Government Code § 50050). Such notice shall state the amount of money, the fund in which it is held and that the money will become the property of the agency on a designated date not less than 45 days and not more than 60 days after the first publication (Government Code § 50051).

Any individual item with a value of less than \$15.00, or any amount if the depositor/owner's name is unknown, which remains unclaimed for a year or by order of the court, may be transferred to the general fund without the necessity of public notice (Government Code § 50055).

If the money remains unclaimed as of the date designated in the published notice, the money will become the property of this [department/office] to fund official law enforcement operations. Money representing restitution collected on behalf of victims shall either be deposited into the Restitution Fund or used for purposes of victim services.

#### 802.7.3 RETENTION OF BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The Evidence Room Supervisor shall ensure that no biological evidence held by the [Department/Office] is destroyed without adequate notification to the following persons, when applicable:

- (a) The defendant
- (b) The defendant's attorney
- (c) The appropriate prosecutor and Attorney General
- (d) Any sexual assault victim
- (e) The Investigation Division supervisor

Biological evidence shall be retained for either a minimum period that has been established by law (Penal Code § 1417.9) or that has been established by the Evidence Room Supervisor, or until the expiration of any imposed sentence that is related to the evidence, whichever time period is greater. Following the retention period, notifications should be made by certified mail and should inform the recipient that the evidence will be destroyed after a date specified in the notice unless a motion seeking an order to retain the sample is filed and served on the [Department/Office] within 180 days of the date of the notification. A record of all certified mail receipts shall be retained in the appropriate file. Any objection to, or motion regarding, the destruction of the biological evidence should be retained in the appropriate file and a copy forwarded to the Investigation Division supervisor.

Biological evidence related to a homicide shall be retained indefinitely and may only be destroyed with the written approval of the Sheriff and the head of the applicable prosecutor's office.

Biological evidence or other crime scene evidence from an unsolved sexual assault should not be disposed of prior to expiration of the statute of limitations and shall be retained as required in Penal Code § 680. Even after expiration of an applicable statute of limitations, the Investigation Division supervisor should be consulted and the sexual assault victim shall be notified at least 60 days

## *Property and Evidence*

---

prior to the disposal (Penal Code § 680). Reasons for not analyzing biological evidence shall be documented in writing (Penal Code § 680.3).

### **802.8 INSPECTIONS OF THE EVIDENCE ROOM**

- (a) On a monthly basis, the supervisor of the evidence custodian shall make an inspection of the evidence storage facilities and practices to ensure adherence to appropriate policies and procedures.
- (b) Unannounced inspections of evidence storage areas shall be conducted annually as directed by the Sheriff.
- (c) An annual audit of evidence held by the department may be directed by the Sheriff or his designee, not routinely or directly connected with evidence control.
- (d) Whenever a change is made in personnel who have access to the evidence room, that individual(s) active directory number (SHXXXX) will be audited to determine the status of all property associated with their active directory number. This will be completed to ensure that evidence records are correct and all evidence property is accounted for.
- (e) Access and entry into the Property and Evidence Room is limited to official business only. Entry must be documented by any person entering the room, including the purpose for the entry. Failure to comply with this will be reported to the Detectives Sergeant. Department personnel, official visitors, authorized building maintenance shall not enter and view the property room unless escorted by a detective or property technician.

## Records Division

### 804.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes the guidelines for the operational functions of the Merced County Sheriff's Office Records Division. The policy addresses [department/office] file access and internal requests for case reports.

#### 804.1.1 NUMERICAL FILING SYSTEM

Case reports are filed numerically within the Records Division by Records Division personnel.

Reports are numbered commencing with the last two digits of the current year followed by a sequential number beginning with 00001 starting at midnight on the first day of January of each year. As an example, case number YY-00001 would be the first new case beginning January 1 of a new year.

### 804.2 FILE ACCESS AND SECURITY

All reports including, but not limited to, initial, supplemental, follow-up, evidence, and all reports critical to a case shall be maintained in a secure area within the Records Division accessible only to authorized Records Division personnel. Access to report files after hours or when records personnel are otherwise not available may be obtained through the appropriate supervisor.

Merced County Sheriff's Office employees shall not access, view or distribute, or allow anyone else to access, view or distribute any record, file or report, whether hard copy or electronic file format, except in accordance with department policy and with a legitimate law enforcement or business purpose or as otherwise permissible by law.

#### 804.2.1 REQUESTING ORIGINAL REPORTS

Generally, original reports shall not be removed from the Records Division. Should an original report be needed for any reason the requesting employee shall first obtain authorization from the Records Supervisor. All original reports removed from the Records Division shall be recorded on the automated Report Management System (RMS) Log which shall constitute the only authorized manner by which an original report may be removed from the Records Division.

### 804.3 DETERMINATION OF FACTUAL INNOCENCE

In any case where a person has been arrested by deputies of the Merced County Sheriff's Office and no accusatory pleading has been filed, the person arrested may petition the Department to destroy the related arrest records. Petitions should be forwarded to the Administrative Supervisor. The Administrative Supervisor should promptly contact the prosecuting attorney and request a written opinion as to whether the petitioner is factually innocent of the charges (Penal Code § 851.8). Factual innocence means the accused person did not commit the crime.

Upon receipt of a written opinion from the prosecuting attorney affirming factual innocence, the Administration Supervisor should forward the petition to the Detective Unit Supervisor and the County Counsel for review. After such review and consultation with the County Counsel, the

## *Records Division*

---

Detective Unit Supervisor and the Administration Supervisor shall decide whether a finding of factual innocence is appropriate.

Upon determination that a finding of factual innocence is appropriate, the Administrative Supervisor shall ensure that the arrest record and petition are sealed for later destruction and the required notifications are made to the California Department of Justice and other law enforcement agencies (Penal Code § 851.8).

The Administrative Supervisor should respond to a petition with the Department's decision within 45 days of receipt. Responses should include only the decision of the Department, not an explanation of the analysis leading to the decision.

### **804.4 ARREST WITHOUT FILING OF ACCUSATORY PLEADING**

The Records Supervisor and The Administrative Captain should ensure a process is in place for when an individual is arrested and released and no accusatory pleading is filed so that the following occurs (Penal Code § 849.5; Penal Code § 851.6):

- (a) The individual is issued a certificate describing the action as a detention.
- (b) All references to an arrest are deleted from the arrest records of the Department and the record reflects only a detention.
- (c) The California Department of Justice is notified.

### **804.5 FILE ACCESS AND SECURITY**

The security of files in the Records Division must be a high priority and shall be maintained as mandated by state or federal law. All case reports including, but not limited to, initial, supplemental, follow-up, evidence and any other reports related to a sheriff's [department/office] case, including field interview (FI) cards, criminal history records and publicly accessible logs, shall be maintained in a secure area within the Records Division, accessible only by authorized members of the Records Division. Access to case reports or files when Records Division staff is not available may be obtained through the Patrol Lieutenant.

The Records Division will also maintain a secure file for case reports deemed by the Sheriff as sensitive or otherwise requiring extraordinary access restrictions.

### **804.6 CONFIDENTIALITY**

Records Division staff has access to information that may be confidential or sensitive in nature. Records Division staff shall not access, view or distribute, or allow anyone else to access, view or distribute any record, file or report, whether in hard copy or electronic file format, or any other confidential, protected or sensitive information except in accordance with the Records Maintenance and Release and Protected Information policies and the Records Division procedure manual.

# Restoration of Firearm Serial Numbers

## 806.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The primary purpose for restoring firearm serial numbers is to determine the prior owners or origin of the item from which the number has been recovered. Thus, property can be returned to rightful owners or investigations can be initiated to curb illegal trade of contraband firearms. The purpose of this plan is to develop standards, methodologies, and safety protocols for the recovery of obliterated serial numbers from firearms and other objects using procedures that are accepted as industry standards in the forensic community. All personnel who are involved in the restoration of serial numbers will observe the following guidelines. This policy complies with Penal Code § 11108.9.

## 806.2 PROCEDURE

Any firearm coming into the possession of the Merced County Sheriff's Office as evidence, found property, etc., where the serial numbers have been removed or obliterated will be processed in the following manner:

### 806.2.1 PRELIMINARY FIREARM EXAMINATION

- (a) Always keep the muzzle pointed in a safe direction. Be sure the firearm is in an unloaded condition. This includes removal of the ammunition source (e.g., the detachable magazine, contents of the tubular magazine) as well as the chamber contents.
- (b) If the firearm is corroded shut or in a condition that would preclude inspection of the chamber contents, treat the firearm as if it is loaded. Make immediate arrangements for a firearms examiner or other qualified examiner to render the firearm safe.
- (c) Accurately record/document the condition of the gun when received. Note the positions of the various components such as the safeties, cylinder, magazine, slide, hammer, etc. Accurately record/document cylinder chamber and magazine contents. Package the ammunition separately.
- (d) If the firearm is to be processed for fingerprints or trace evidence, process before the serial number restoration is attempted. First record/document important aspects such as halos on the revolver cylinder face or other relevant evidence that might be obscured by the fingerprinting chemicals.

### 806.2.2 PROPERTY BOOKING PROCEDURE

Any employee taking possession of a firearm with removed/obliterated serial numbers shall book the firearm into property following standard procedures. The employee booking the firearm shall indicate on the property form that serial numbers have been removed or obliterated.

## *Restoration of Firearm Serial Numbers*

---

### **806.2.3 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY**

The property and evidence technician receiving a firearm when the serial numbers have been removed or obliterated shall arrange for the firearm to be transported to the crime lab for restoration and maintain the chain of evidence.

### **806.2.4 DOCUMENTATION**

Case reports are prepared in order to document the chain of custody and the initial examination and handling of evidence from the time it is received/collected until it is released.

This report must include a record of the manner in which and/or from whom the firearm was received. This may appear on the request form or property form depending on the type of evidence.

### **806.2.5 FIREARM TRACE**

After the serial number has been restored (or partially restored) by the criminalistics laboratory, the property and evidence technician will complete a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) National Tracing Center (NTC) Obliterated Serial Number Trace Request Form (ATF 3312.1-OBL) and forward the form to the NTC in Falling Waters, West Virginia or enter the data into the ATF eTrace system.

### **806.3 BULLET AND CASING IDENTIFICATION**

Exemplar bullets and cartridge cases from the firearm, depending upon acceptance criteria and protocol, may be submitted to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) which uses the Integrated Ballistic Identification System (IBIS) technology to search the national database and compare with ballistic evidence recovered from other crime scenes.

## Records Maintenance and Release

### 808.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidance on the maintenance and release of [department/office] records. Protected information is separately covered in the Protected Information Policy.

### 808.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing public access to records in a manner that is consistent with the California Public Records Act (Government Code § 6250 et seq.).

#### 808.2.1 OTHER RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Any other records or information, regardless of form and nature, belonging to or pertaining directly or indirectly to the department or Merced County that are otherwise not addressed by this policy shall not be disclosed to the public, the news media, or any unauthorized party for whatever reason without the express authorization of the Sheriff.

"Records or Information" include, but are not limited to, all writings (whether handwritten or in any other form), E-mail, facsimile, Internet and Intranet content, information stored in departmental computers or in any electronic form, symbols, drawings, official reports, draft reports, statistical information, citations, correspondence, internal and external memoranda, policies, procedures, audio and visual recordings, photographs, digital images and conversations.

Disclosure of such records, information, and conversations pertaining to the department and the county which an employee would and should reasonably be expected, based on the applicable provisions of the Department Policy Manual and their intent, not to disclose is prohibited. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action.

Any other record not addressed in this policy shall not be subject to release where such record is exempt or prohibited from disclosure pursuant to state or federal law, including, but not limited to, provisions of the Evidence Code relating to privilege or to the security of the department's electronic technology systems (Government Code § 6254(k) and Government Code 6254.19).

The Department maintains the right to refuse to disclose or release any other record when it would appear that the public's interest in accessing such record is outweighed by the need for nondisclosure (Government Code § 6255).

Any record which was created exclusively in anticipation of potential litigation involving this department shall not be subject to public disclosure (Government Code § 6254(b)).

### 808.3 CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS RESPONSIBILITIES

The Sheriff shall designate a Custodian of Records. The responsibilities of the Custodian of Records include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Managing the records management system for the [Department/Office], including the retention, archiving, release and destruction of [department/office] public records.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

- (b) Maintaining and updating the [department/office] records retention schedule including:
  - 1. Identifying the minimum length of time the [Department/Office] must keep records.
  - 2. Identifying the [department/office] division responsible for the original record.
- (c) Establishing rules regarding the inspection and copying of [department/office] public records as reasonably necessary for the protection of such records.
- (d) Identifying records or portions of records that are confidential under state or federal law and not open for inspection or copying.
- (e) Establishing rules regarding the processing of subpoenas for the production of records.
- (f) Ensuring a current schedule of fees for public records as allowed by law is available (Government Code § 6253).
- (g) Determining how the [department/office]'s website may be used to post public records in accordance with Government Code § 6253.
- (h) Ensuring that public records posted on the [Department/Office] website meet the requirements of Government Code § 6253.10 including, but not limited to, posting in an open format where a record may be retrieved, downloaded, indexed and searched by a commonly used Internet search application.
- (i) Ensuring that a list and description, when applicable, of enterprise systems (as defined by Government Code § 6270.5) is publicly available upon request and posted in a prominent location on the [Department/Office]'s website.

### **808.4 PROCESSING REQUESTS FOR PUBLIC RECORDS**

Any [department/office] member who receives a request for any record shall route the request to the Custodian of Records or the authorized designee.

#### **808.4.1 REQUESTS FOR RECORDS**

Any member of the public, including the media and elected officials, may access unrestricted records of this [department/office], during regular business hours by submitting a written and signed request that reasonably describes each record sought and paying any associated fees (Government Code § 6253).

The processing of requests for any record is subject to the following (Government Code § 6253):

- (a) The [Department/Office] is not required to create records that do not exist.
- (b) Victims of an incident or their authorized representative shall not be required to show proof of legal presence in the United States to obtain [department/office] records or information. If identification is required, a current driver's license or identification card issued by any state in the United States, a current passport issued by the United States or a foreign government with which the United States has a diplomatic relationship or current Matricula Consular card is acceptable (Government Code § 6254.30).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

- (c) Either the requested record or the reason for non-disclosure will be provided promptly, but no later than 10 days from the date of request, unless unusual circumstances preclude doing so. If more time is needed, an extension of up to 14 additional days may be authorized by the Custodian of Records or the authorized designee. If an extension is authorized, the [Department/Office] shall provide the requester written notice that includes the reason for the extension and the anticipated date of the response.
  - 1. When the request does not reasonably describe the records sought, the Custodian of Records shall assist the requester in making the request focused and effective in a way to identify the records or information that would be responsive to the request including providing assistance for overcoming any practical basis for denying access to the records or information. The Custodian of Records shall also assist in describing the information technology and physical location in which the record exists (Government Code § 6253.1).
  - 2. If the record requested is available on the [department/office] website, the requester may be directed to the location on the website where the record is posted. If the requester is unable to access or reproduce the record, a copy of the record shall be promptly provided.
- (d) Upon request, a record shall be provided in an electronic format utilized by the [Department/Office]. Records shall not be provided only in electronic format unless specifically requested (Government Code § 6253.9).
- (e) When a record contains material with release restrictions and material that is not subject to release restrictions, the restricted material shall be redacted and the unrestricted material released.
  - 1. A copy of the redacted release should be maintained in the case file for proof of what was actually released and as a place to document the reasons for the redactions. If the record is audio or video, a copy of the redacted audio/video release should be maintained in the [department/office]-approved media storage system and a notation should be made in the case file to document the release and the reasons for the redacted portions.
- (f) If a record request is denied in whole or part, the requester shall be provided a written response that includes the statutory exemption for withholding the record or facts that the public interest served by nondisclosure outweighs the interest served by disclosure (Government Code § 6255). The written response shall also include the names, titles or positions of each person responsible for the denial.

#### **808.5 RELEASE RESTRICTIONS**

Examples of release restrictions include:

- (a) Personal identifying information, including an individual's photograph; Social Security and driver identification numbers; name, address and telephone number; and medical or disability information that is contained in any driver license record, motor vehicle record or any [department/office] record, including traffic collision reports, are restricted except as authorized by the [Department/Office], and only when such use or disclosure is permitted or required by law to carry out a legitimate law enforcement purpose (18 USC § 2721; 18 USC § 2722).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

- (b) Social Security numbers (Government Code § 6254.29).
- (c) Personnel records, medical records and similar records which would involve an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy (Government Code § 6254; Penal Code § 832.7; Penal Code § 832.8; Evidence Code § 1043 et seq.).
  - 1. Peace officer personnel records are deemed confidential and shall not be made public or otherwise released to unauthorized individuals or entities absent a valid court order.
  - 2. The identity of any deputy subject to any criminal or administrative investigation shall not be released without the consent of the involved deputy, prior approval of the Sheriff or as required by law.
- (d) Victim information that may be protected by statutes, including victims of certain crimes who have requested that their identifying information be kept confidential, victims who are minors and victims of certain offenses (e.g., sex crimes or human trafficking, Penal Code § 293). Addresses and telephone numbers of a victim or a witness to any arrested person or to any person who may be a defendant in a criminal action shall not be disclosed, unless it is required by law (Government Code § 6254; Penal Code § 841.5).
  - 1. Victims of certain offenses (e.g., domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking, human trafficking, adult abuse) or their representative shall be provided, upon request and without charge, one copy of all incident report face sheets, one copy of all incident reports, or both, pursuant to the requirements and time frames of Family Code § 6228.
  - 2. Victims of sexual assault, upon written request, shall be provided a free copy of the initial crime report regardless of whether the report has been closed. Personal identifying information may be redacted (Penal Code § 680.2(b)).
- (e) Video or audio recordings created during the commission or investigation of the crime of rape, incest, sexual assault, domestic violence or child abuse that depicts the face, intimate body part or voice of a victim of the incident except as provided by Government Code § 6254.4.5.
- (f) Information involving confidential informants, intelligence information, information that would endanger the safety of any person involved or information that would endanger the successful completion of the investigation or a related investigation. This includes analysis and conclusions of investigating deputies (Evidence Code § 1041; Government Code § 6254).
  - 1. Absent a statutory exemption to the contrary or other lawful reason to deem information from reports confidential, information from unrestricted agency reports shall be made public as outlined in Government Code § 6254(f).
- (g) Local criminal history information including, but not limited to, arrest history and disposition, and fingerprints shall only be subject to release to those agencies and individuals set forth in Penal Code § 13300.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

1. All requests from criminal defendants and their authorized representatives (including attorneys) shall be referred to the District Attorney, County Counsel or the courts pursuant to Penal Code § 1054.5.
- (h) Certain types of reports involving, but not limited to, child abuse and molestation (Penal Code § 11167.5), elder and dependent abuse (Welfare and Institutions Code § 15633) and juveniles (Welfare and Institutions Code § 827).
- (i) Sealed autopsy and private medical information concerning a murdered child with the exceptions that allow dissemination of those reports to law enforcement agents, prosecutors, defendants or civil litigants under state and federal discovery laws (Code of Civil Procedure §130).
- (j) Information contained in applications for licenses to carry firearms or other files that indicates when or where the applicant is vulnerable or which contains medical or psychological information (Government Code § 6254).
- (k) Traffic collision reports (and related supplemental reports) shall be considered confidential and subject to release only to the California Highway Patrol, Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), other law enforcement agencies and those individuals and their authorized representatives set forth in Vehicle Code § 20012.
- (l) Any record created exclusively in anticipation of potential litigation involving this [department/office] (Government Code § 6254).
- (m) Any memorandum from legal counsel until the pending litigation has been adjudicated or otherwise settled (Government Code § 6254.25).
- (n) Records relating to the security of the [department/office]'s electronic technology systems (Government Code § 6254.19).
- (o) Any other record not addressed in this policy shall not be subject to release where such record is exempt or prohibited from disclosure pursuant to state or federal law, including, but not limited to, provisions of the Evidence Code relating to privilege (Government Code § 6254).
- (p) Information connected with juvenile court proceedings or the detention or custody of a juvenile. Federal officials may be required to obtain a court order to obtain certain juvenile information (Welfare and Institutions Code § 827.9; Welfare and Institutions Code § 831).

#### **808.6 SUBPOENAS AND DISCOVERY REQUESTS**

Any member who receives a subpoena duces tecum or discovery request for records should promptly contact a supervisor and the Custodian of Records for review and processing. While a subpoena duces tecum may ultimately be subject to compliance, it is not an order from the court that will automatically require the release of the requested information.

Generally, discovery requests and subpoenas from criminal defendants and their authorized representatives (including attorneys) should be referred to the District Attorney, County Counsel or the courts.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

All questions regarding compliance with any subpoena duces tecum or discovery request should be promptly referred to legal counsel for the [Department/Office] so that a timely response can be prepared.

#### **808.7 RELEASED RECORDS TO BE MARKED**

Each page of any written record released pursuant to this policy should be stamped in a colored ink or otherwise marked to indicate the [department/office] name and to whom the record was released.

Each audio/video recording released should include the [department/office] name and to whom the record was released.

#### **808.8 SEALED RECORD ORDERS**

Sealed record orders received by the [Department/Office] shall be reviewed for appropriate action by the Custodian of Records. The Custodian of Records shall seal such records as ordered by the court. Records may include, but are not limited to, a record of arrest, investigation, detention or conviction. Once the record is sealed, members shall respond to any inquiry as though the record did not exist (Penal Code § 851.8; Welfare and Institutions Code § 781).

When an arrest record is sealed pursuant to Penal Code § 851.87, Penal Code § 851.90, Penal Code § 951.91, Penal Code § 1000.4 or Penal Code § 1001.9, the Records Supervisor shall ensure that the required notations on local summary criminal history information and police investigative reports are made. Sealed records may be disclosed or used as authorized by Penal Code § 851.92.

#### **808.9 SECURITY BREACHES**

The Records Supervisor shall ensure notice is given anytime there is a reasonable belief an unauthorized person has acquired either unencrypted personal identifying information or encrypted personal information along with the encryption key or security credential stored in any [Department/Office] information system (Civil Code § 1798.29).

Notice shall be given as soon as reasonably practicable to all individuals whose information may have been acquired. The notification may be delayed if the [Department/Office] determines that notification will impede a criminal investigation or any measures necessary to determine the scope of the breach and restore the reasonable integrity of the data system.

For the purposes of this requirement, personal identifying information includes an individual's first name or first initial and last name in combination with any one or more of the following:

- Social Security number
- Driver license number or California identification card number
- Account number or credit or debit card number, in combination with any required security code, access code or password that would permit access to an individual's financial account

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

- Medical information
- Health insurance information
- A username or email address, in combination with a password or security question and answer that permits access to an online account
- Information or data collected by Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) technology

#### 808.9.1 FORM OF NOTICE

- (a) The notice shall be written in plain language, be consistent with the format provided in Civil Code § 1798.29 and include, to the extent possible, the following:
  1. The date of the notice.
  2. Name and contact information for the Merced County Sheriff's Office.
  3. A list of the types of personal information that were or are reasonably believed to have been acquired.
  4. The estimated date or date range within which the security breach occurred.
  5. Whether the notification was delayed as a result of a law enforcement investigation.
  6. A general description of the security breach.
  7. The toll-free telephone numbers and addresses of the major credit reporting agencies, if the breach exposed a Social Security number or a driver license or California identification card number.
- (b) The notice may also include information about what the Merced County Sheriff's Office has done to protect individuals whose information has been breached and may include information on steps that the person whose information has been breached may take to protect him/herself (Civil Code § 1798.29).
- (c) When a breach involves an online account, and only a username or email address in combination with either a password or security question and answer that would permit access to an online account, and no other personal information has been breached (Civil Code § 1798.29):
  1. Notification may be provided electronically or in another form directing the person to promptly change either his/her password or security question and answer, as applicable, or to take other appropriate steps to protect the online account with the [Department/Office] in addition to any other online accounts for which the person uses the same username or email address and password or security question and answer.
  2. When the breach involves an email address that was furnished by the Merced County Sheriff's Office, notification of the breach should not be sent to that email address but should instead be made by another appropriate medium as prescribed by Civil Code § 1798.29.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Records Maintenance and Release*

---

#### 808.9.2 MANNER OF NOTICE

- (a) Notice may be provided by one of the following methods (Civil Code § 1798.29):
  - 1. Written notice.
  - 2. Electronic notice if the notice provided is consistent with the provisions regarding electronic records and signatures set forth in 15 USC § 7001.
  - 3. Substitute notice if the cost of providing notice would exceed \$250,000, the number of individuals exceeds 500,000 or the [Department/Office] does not have sufficient contact information. Substitute notice shall consist of all of the following:
    - (a) Email notice when the [Department/Office] has an email address for the subject person.
    - (b) Conspicuous posting of the notice on the [department/office]'s webpage for a minimum of 30 days.
  - 4. Notification to major statewide media and the California Information Security Office within the California Department of Technology.
- (b) If a single breach requires the [Department/Office] to notify more than 500 California residents, the [Department/Office] shall electronically submit a sample copy of the notification, excluding any personally identifiable information, to the Attorney General.

## Protected Information

### 810.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the access, transmission, release and security of protected information by members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office. This policy addresses the protected information that is used in the day-to-day operation of the [Department/Office] and not the public records information covered in the Records Maintenance and Release Policy.

#### 810.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Protected information** - Any information or data that is collected, stored or accessed by members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office and is subject to any access or release restrictions imposed by law, regulation, order or use agreement. This includes all information contained in federal, state or local law enforcement databases that is not accessible to the public.

### 810.2 POLICY

Members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office will adhere to all applicable laws, orders, regulations, use agreements and training related to the access, use, dissemination and release of protected information.

### 810.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

The Sheriff shall select a member of the [Department/Office] to coordinate the use of protected information.

The responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring member compliance with this policy and with requirements applicable to protected information, including requirements for the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) system, National Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (NLETS), Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) records and California Law Enforcement Telecommunications System (CLETS).
- (b) Developing, disseminating and maintaining procedures that adopt or comply with the U.S. Department of Justice's current Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policy.
- (c) Developing, disseminating and maintaining any other procedures necessary to comply with any other requirements for the access, use, dissemination, release and security of protected information.
- (d) Developing procedures to ensure training and certification requirements are met.
- (e) Resolving specific questions that arise regarding authorized recipients of protected information.
- (f) Ensuring security practices and procedures are in place to comply with requirements applicable to protected information.

## *Protected Information*

---

### **810.4 ACCESS TO PROTECTED INFORMATION**

Protected information shall not be accessed in violation of any law, order, regulation, user agreement, Merced County Sheriff's Office policy or training. Only those members who have completed applicable training and met any applicable requirements, such as a background check, may access protected information, and only when the member has a legitimate work-related reason for such access.

Unauthorized access, including access for other than a legitimate work-related purpose, is prohibited and may subject a member to administrative action pursuant to the Personnel Complaints Policy and/or criminal prosecution.

#### **810.4.1 PENALTIES FOR MISUSE OF RECORDS**

It is a misdemeanor to furnish, buy, receive or possess Department of Justice criminal history information without authorization by law (Penal Code § 11143).

Authorized persons or agencies violating state regulations regarding the security of Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) maintained by the California Department of Justice may lose direct access to CORI (11 CCR 702).

#### **810.4.2 RELEASE OF CORI**

Only the persons listed below are authorized to release CORI. Each authorized person releasing CORI is responsible to ensure that each request granted appears legitimate and that the requester is an authorized recipient with a right and need to know.

- (a) Criminal Records Security Officer
- (b) Records Supervisor
- (c) Full-time employees of the Records Division
- (d) Personnel specifically designated in writing by Division Captains with the concurrence of the Criminal Records Security Officer

#### **810.4.3 RELEASE OF CORI TO FIELD PERSONNEL**

Personnel shall not have access to CORI until a background investigation has been completed and approved.

CORI shall not generally be transmitted by radio, cellular phone, or through computer terminals to field personnel or vehicles except in cases where circumstances reasonably indicate that the immediate safety of the deputy or the public are at significant risk. Examples of situations where the transmission of summary criminal history information would be justified include a hostage situation or an armed suspect however a routine investigation or traffic enforcement stop would not be sufficient justification.

Nothing in this procedure is intended to prohibit broadcasting warrant information concerning wanted persons.

## *Protected Information*

---

### **810.5 RELEASE OR DISSEMINATION OF PROTECTED INFORMATION**

Protected information may be released only to authorized recipients who have both a right to know and a need to know.

A member who is asked to release protected information that should not be released should refer the requesting person to a supervisor or to the Records Supervisor for information regarding a formal request.

Unless otherwise ordered or when an investigation would be jeopardized, protected information maintained by the [Department/Office] may generally be shared with authorized persons from other law enforcement agencies who are assisting in the investigation or conducting a related investigation. Any such information should be released through the Records Division to ensure proper documentation of the release (see the Records Maintenance and Release Policy).

Protected information, such as Criminal Justice Information (CJI), which includes Criminal History Record Information (CHRI), should generally not be transmitted by radio, cellular telephone or any other type of wireless transmission to members in the field or in vehicles through any computer or electronic device, except in cases where there is an immediate need for the information to further an investigation or where circumstances reasonably indicate that the immediate safety of deputies, other [department/office] members or the public is at risk.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit broadcasting warrant information.

#### **810.5.1 REVIEW OF CRIMINAL OFFENDER RECORD**

Individuals requesting to review their own California criminal history information shall be referred to the Department of Justice (Penal Code § 11121).

Individuals shall be allowed to review their arrest or conviction record on file with the [Department/Office] after complying with all legal requirements regarding authority and procedures in Penal Code § 11120 through Penal Code § 11127 (Penal Code § 13321).

### **810.6 SECURITY OF PROTECTED INFORMATION**

The Sheriff will select a member of the [Department/Office] to oversee the security of protected information.

The responsibilities of this position include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Developing and maintaining security practices, procedures and training.
- (b) Ensuring federal and state compliance with the CJIS Security Policy and the requirements of any state or local criminal history records systems.
- (c) Establishing procedures to provide for the preparation, prevention, detection, analysis and containment of security incidents including computer attacks.
- (d) Tracking, documenting and reporting all breach of security incidents to the Sheriff and appropriate authorities.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Protected Information*

---

#### 810.6.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members accessing or receiving protected information shall ensure the information is not accessed or received by persons who are not authorized to access or receive it. This includes leaving protected information, such as documents or computer databases, accessible to others when it is reasonably foreseeable that unauthorized access may occur (e.g., on an unattended table or desk; in or on an unattended vehicle; in an unlocked desk drawer or file cabinet; on an unattended computer terminal).

#### **810.7 TRAINING**

All members authorized to access or release protected information shall complete a training program that complies with any protected information system requirements and identifies authorized access and use of protected information, as well as its proper handling and dissemination.

##### 810.7.1 COMPUTER TERMINAL SECURITY

Computer terminal equipment capable of providing access to automated criminal offender record information is located in the Records Division, Dispatch and in the Detective Unit to preclude access by unauthorized persons.

No employee shall be authorized to operate computer terminal equipment with access to CORI until the operator has completed the appropriate training.

##### 810.7.2 DESTRUCTION OF CORI

When any document providing CORI has served the purpose for which it was obtained, it shall be destroyed by shredding.

Each employee shall be responsible for destroying the CORI documents they receive.

##### 810.7.3 CUSTODIAN OF CRIMINAL RECORDS

The Records Supervisor, unless otherwise directed by the Administration Division Manager, shall be the Department's official Custodian of Criminal Records. The Custodian of Criminal Records shall be responsible for the security, storage, dissemination and destruction of criminal records, and will serve as a primary contact for the California Department of Justice for any related issues. The Administration Division Manager may appoint other department employees to the role of Custodian of Criminal Records, who will share the same responsibilities regarding criminal records.

The Administration will ensure that he/she makes the appropriate applications and notifications to the California Department of Justice regarding the Department's Custodian of Criminal Record appointments, per the requirements of Penal Code § 11102.2.

This subsection is not intended to interfere with any other employee acting as a custodian of records for other statutory purposes but is narrowly tailored to address issues of criminal history records.

## *Protected Information*

---

### **810.8 TRAINING PROGRAM**

All personnel authorized to process or release CORI shall be required to complete a training program prescribed by the Administrative Manager who shall coordinate the course to provide training in the proper use, control, and dissemination of CORI.

### **810.9 PENALTIES FOR MISUSE OF RECORDS**

Penal Code §§ 11140 and 11144 make it a misdemeanor to furnish, buy, receive, or possess Department of Justice rap sheets without authorization by a court, statute, or case law.

Title 11, California Administrative Code § 702 provides that authorized persons or agencies violating the Regulations Regarding the Security of Criminal Offender Record Information in California may lose direct access to CORI maintained by the California Department of Justice.

Divulging the content of any criminal record to anyone other than authorized personnel is a violation of Policy Manual § 340.3.7(a).

Employees who obtain, or attempt to obtain, information from the department files other than that to which they are entitled in accordance with their official duties is a violation of Policy Manual § 340.3.7(a).

### **810.10 CALIFORNIA RELIGIOUS FREEDOM ACT**

Members shall not release personal information from any agency database for the purpose of investigation or enforcement of any program compiling data on individuals based on religious belief, practice, affiliation, national origin or ethnicity (Government Code § 8310.3).

# Computers and Digital Evidence

## 812.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes procedures for the seizure and storage of computers, personal communications devices (PCDs) digital cameras, digital recorders and other electronic devices that are capable of storing digital information; and for the preservation and storage of digital evidence. All evidence seized and/or processed pursuant to this policy shall be done so in compliance with clearly established Fourth Amendment and search and seizure provisions.

## 812.2 SEIZING COMPUTERS AND RELATED EVIDENCE

Computer equipment requires specialized training and handling to preserve its value as evidence. Deputies should be aware of the potential to destroy information through careless or improper handling, and utilize the most knowledgeable available resources. When seizing a computer and accessories the following steps should be taken:

- (a) Photograph each item, front and back, specifically including cable connections to other items. Look for a phone line or cable to a modem for Internet access.
- (b) Do not overlook the possibility of the presence of physical evidence on and around the hardware relevant to the particular investigation such as fingerprints, biological or trace evidence, and/or documents.
- (c) If the computer is off, do not turn it on.
- (d) If the computer is on, do not shut it down normally and do not click on anything or examine any files.
  1. Photograph the screen, if possible, and note any programs or windows that appear to be open and running.
  2. Disconnect the power cable from the back of the computer box or if a portable notebook style, disconnect any power cable from the case and remove the battery).
- (e) Label each item with case number, evidence sheet number, and item number.
- (f) Handle and transport the computer and storage media (e.g., tape, discs, memory cards, flash memory, external drives) with care so that potential evidence is not lost.
- (g) Lodge all computer items in the Property Room. Do not store computers where normal room temperature and humidity is not maintained.
- (h) At minimum, deputies should document the following in related reports:
  1. Where the computer was located and whether or not it was in operation.
  2. Who was using it at the time.
  3. Who claimed ownership.

## *Computers and Digital Evidence*

---

4. If it can be determined, how it was being used.
  - (i) In most cases when a computer is involved in criminal acts and is in the possession of the suspect, the computer itself and all storage devices (hard drives, tape drives, and disk drives) should be seized along with all media. Accessories (printers, monitors, mouse, scanner, keyboard, cables, software and manuals) should not be seized unless as a precursor to forfeiture.

### **812.2.1 BUSINESS OR NETWORKED COMPUTERS**

If the computer belongs to a business or is part of a network, it may not be feasible to seize the entire computer. Cases involving networks require specialized handling. Deputies should contact a certified forensic computer examiner for instructions or a response to the scene. It may be possible to perform an on-site inspection, or to image the hard drive only of the involved computer. This should only be done by someone specifically trained in processing computers for evidence.

### **812.2.2 FORENSIC EXAMINATION OF COMPUTERS**

If an examination of the contents of the computer's hard drive, or floppy disks, compact discs, or any other storage media is required, forward the following items to a computer forensic examiner:

- (a) Copy of report(s) involving the computer, including the Evidence/Property sheet.
- (b) Copy of a consent to search form signed by the computer owner or the person in possession of the computer, or a copy of a search warrant authorizing the search of the computer hard drive for evidence relating to investigation.
- (c) A listing of the items to search for (e.g., photographs, financial records, e-mail, documents).
- (d) An exact duplicate of the hard drive or disk will be made using a forensic computer and a forensic software program by someone trained in the examination of computer storage devices for evidence.

### **812.3 SEIZING DIGITAL STORAGE MEDIA**

Digital storage media including hard drives, floppy discs, CD's, DVD's, tapes, memory cards, or flash memory devices should be seized and stored in a manner that will protect them from damage.

- (a) If the media has a write-protection tab or switch, it should be activated.
- (b) Do not review, access or open digital files prior to submission. If the information is needed for immediate investigation request the Evidence Room to copy the contents to an appropriate form of storage media.
- (c) Many kinds of storage media can be erased or damaged by magnetic fields. Keep all media away from magnetic devices, electric motors, radio transmitters or other sources of magnetic fields.

## *Computers and Digital Evidence*

---

- (d) Do not leave storage media where they would be subject to excessive heat such as in a parked vehicle on a hot day.
- (e) Use plastic cases designed to protect the media, or other protective packaging, to prevent damage.

### **812.4 SEIZING PCDS**

Personal communication devices such as cell phones, PDAs or other hand-held devices connected to any communication network must be handled with care to preserve evidence that may be on the device including messages, stored data and/or images.

- (a) Deputies should not attempt to access, review or search the contents of such devices prior to examination by a forensic expert. Unsent messages can be lost, data can be inadvertently deleted and incoming messages can override stored messages.
- (b) Do not turn the device on or off. The device should be placed in a solid metal container such as a paint can or in a faraday bag, to prevent the device from sending or receiving information from its host network.
- (c) When seizing the devices, also seize the charging units and keep them plugged in to the chargers until they can be examined. If the batteries go dead all the data may be lost.

### **812.5 DIGITAL EVIDENCE RECORDED BY OFFICERS**

Deputies handling and submitting recorded and digitally stored evidence from digital cameras and audio or video recorders will comply with these procedures to ensure the integrity and admissibility of such evidence.

#### **812.5.1 COLLECTION OF DIGITAL EVIDENCE**

Once evidence is recorded it shall not be erased, deleted or altered in any way prior to submission. All photographs taken will be preserved regardless of quality, composition or relevance. The content of video and audio files will not be altered in any way. Files may be separated from each other for report organization purposes.

#### **812.5.2 SUBMISSION OF DIGITAL MEDIA**

The information stored on the recording media (smart card, compact flash card or any other media) shall be transferred (downloaded) to a CD (compact disc) before the end of the respective deputy's shift unless specifically excused by the appropriate supervisor. The CD shall then be submitted along with the respective report. This procedure will constitute submission of such evidence.

#### **812.5.3 PRESERVATION OF DIGITAL EVIDENCE**

- (a) If a media storage device is submitted into evidence, only evidence technicians or detectives are authorized to access such media that is held as evidence. The original media storage device shall remain in evidence and shall remain unaltered.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Computers and Digital Evidence*

---

- (b) Digital images that are enhanced to provide a better quality photograph for identification and investigative purposes must only be made from a copy of the original media.
- (c) If any enhancement is done to the copy of the original, it shall be noted in the corresponding incident report.

# Animal Control

## 818.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for interacting with animals and responding to calls for service that involve animals.

## 818.2 DEPUTY RESPONSIBILITY

During hours when the Animal Control Officer is off-duty, or if the ACO is otherwise unavailable, the following animal related calls for service will be handled by the appropriate on-duty deputy.

Deputies may be dispatched to animal related calls and should take appropriate actions to control the situation until the arrival of an ACO. Due to the hazards of handling animals without proper equipment, responding deputies generally should not attempt to capture and pick up any animal, but should keep the animal under observation until the arrival of the ACO. The following are examples of when a deputy may consider acting before the arrival of the ACO:

- (a) When there is a threat to the public safety.
- (b) When animal has bitten someone, deputies should take measures to confine the animal and prevent further injury.
- (c) When an animal is creating a traffic hazard.
- (d) When the owner/handler has been arrested and there is no other alternative placement for the animal.
- (e) When the animal is gravely injured.

### 818.2.1 STRAY DOGS

If the dog has a license or can otherwise be identified, the owner should be contacted, if possible. If the owner is contacted, the dog should be released to the owner and a citation may be issued if appropriate. If a dog is taken into custody, it shall be transported to the Animal Shelter, making sure the animal has food, water, and bedding.

## 818.3 INJURED ANIMALS

When any injured domesticated animal is brought to the attention of a member of this agency, all reasonable attempts shall be made to contact the owner or responsible handler. When the owner or responsible handler cannot be located and the animal is not an immediate danger to the community, it shall be taken to a doctor of veterinary medicine as described below (Penal Code 597.1).

- (a) During normal business hours, the animal should be taken to an authorized veterinary care clinic.
- (b) If after normal business hours, the animal should be taken to the authorized Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Services Clinic.

## *Animal Control*

---

- (c) The only exception to the above is when the animal is an immediate danger to the community or the owner of the animal is identified and takes responsibility for the injured animal.
  - 1. When the need to kill a seriously injured or dangerous animal is necessary, the department Firearms Policy shall be followed. The decision to dispose of a seriously injured animal will rest with the on-duty patrol supervisor.
- (d) Injured wildlife should be referred to the SPCA, Marine Mammal Center or Department of Fish and Wildlife as applicable. The SPCA will not pick up common pigeons (red legs), starlings, bats or skunks.
- (e) When handling dead or injured animals department employees shall attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.
- (f) Each incident shall be documented and, at minimum, include the name of the reporting party and veterinary hospital and/or person to whom the animal is released. If the ACO is off duty, the information will be forwarded for follow-up.

### 818.3.1 RESCUE OF ANIMALS IN VEHICLES

If an animal left unattended in a vehicle appears to be in distress, members may enter the vehicle for the purpose of rescuing the animal. Members should (Penal Code § 597.7(d)):

- (a) Make a reasonable effort to locate the owner before entering the vehicle.
- (b) Take steps to minimize damage to the vehicle.
- (c) Refrain from searching the vehicle or seizing items except as otherwise permitted by law.
- (d) Leave notice on or in the vehicle identifying the location where the animal has been taken and the name and Department of the member involved in the rescue.
- (e) Make reasonable efforts to contact the owner or secure the vehicle before leaving the scene.
- (f) Take the animal to an animal care facility, a place of safekeeping or, if necessary, a veterinary hospital for treatment.

### 818.3.2 INJURED WILDLIFE

Injured wildlife should be referred to the Department of Fish and Wildlife or the Marine Mammal Center as applicable.

### 818.3.3 VETERINARY CARE

The injured animal should be taken to a veterinarian as follows:

- (a) During normal business hours, the animal should be taken to an authorized veterinary care clinic.
- (b) If after normal business hours, the animal should be taken to the authorized Veterinary Emergency and Critical Care Services Clinic.

## *Animal Control*

---

- (c) An exception to the above exists when the animal is an immediate danger to the community or the owner of the animal is identified and takes responsibility for the injured animal.

Each incident shall be documented and, at minimum, include the name of the reporting party and veterinary hospital and/or person to whom the animal is released.

If [Animal Control] is not available, the information will be forwarded for follow-up.

### **818.4 CITATIONS**

It should be at the discretion of the handling deputy or the Field Supervisor as to the need for, or advisability of, the issuance of a citation for a violation.

### **818.5 POST-ARREST PROCEDURES**

The arresting deputy should make a reasonable effort to ensure that animals or pets under a person's care will be provided with adequate care when that person is arrested. This is only required when there is no person to provide care and the arrestee is expected to be in custody for a time period longer than would reasonably allow him/her to properly care for the animals.

Relatives or neighbors may be contacted, with the owner's consent, to care for the animals. If no persons can be found or the owner does not consent, the appropriate animal control authority should be notified.

### **818.6 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to be responsive to the needs of the community regarding animal-related issues. This includes enforcing local, state and federal laws relating to animals and appropriately resolving or referring animal-related problems, as outlined in this policy.

### **818.7 ANIMAL CRUELTY COMPLAINTS**

Laws relating to the cruelty to animals should be enforced, including but not limited to Penal Code § 597 et seq. (cruelty to animals, failure to care for animals).

- (a) An investigation should be conducted on all reports of animal cruelty.
- (b) Legal steps should be taken to protect an animal that is in need of immediate care or protection from acts of cruelty.

### **818.8 ANIMAL BITE REPORTS**

Members investigating an animal bite should obtain as much information as possible for follow-up with the appropriate health or animal authorities. Efforts should be made to capture or otherwise have the animal placed under control. Members should attempt to identify and notify the owner of the final disposition of the animal.

## *Animal Control*

---

### **818.9 DANGEROUS ANIMALS**

In the event responding members cannot fulfill a request for service because an animal is difficult or dangerous to handle, the on duty sergeant will be contacted to determine available resources, including requesting the assistance of animal control services from an allied agency.

### **818.10 PUBLIC NUISANCE CALLS RELATING TO ANIMALS**

Members should diligently address calls related to nuisance animals (e.g., barking dogs), as such calls may involve significant quality-of-life issues.

### **818.11 DESTRUCTION OF ANIMALS**

When it is necessary to use a firearm to euthanize a badly injured animal or stop an animal that poses an imminent threat to human safety, the Firearms Policy shall be followed. A badly injured animal shall only be euthanized with the approval of a supervisor.

## **Chapter 10 - Personnel**

# Recruitment and Selection

## 1000.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides a framework for employee recruiting efforts and identifying job-related standards for the selection process. This policy supplements the rules that govern employment practices for the Merced County Sheriff's Office and that are promulgated and maintained by the Department of Human Resources.

## 1000.2 POLICY

In accordance with applicable federal, state and local law, the Merced County Sheriff's Office provides equal opportunities for applicants and employees, regardless of race, gender expression, age, pregnancy, religion, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental handicap, genetic information, veteran status, marital status, sex or any other protected class or status. The Department does not show partiality or grant any special status to any applicant, employee or group of employees unless otherwise required by law.

The Department will recruit and hire only those individuals who demonstrate a commitment to service and who possess the traits and characteristics that reflect personal integrity and high ethical standards.

## 1000.3 RECRUITMENT

The Administrative Sergeant works directly with the Undersheriff and Director of Administrative Services to employ a comprehensive recruitment and selection strategy to recruit and select employees from a qualified and diverse pool of candidates.

The strategy should include:

- (a) Identification of racially and culturally diverse target markets.
- (b) Use of marketing strategies to target diverse applicant pools.
- (c) Expanded use of technology and maintenance of a strong Internet presence. This may include an interactive department website and the use of department-managed social networking sites, if resources permit.
- (d) Expanded outreach through partnerships with media, community groups, citizen academies, local colleges, universities and the military.
- (e) Employee referral and recruitment incentive programs.
- (f) Consideration of shared or collaborative regional testing processes.

The hiring authority shall avoid advertising, recruiting and screening practices that tend to stereotype, focus on homogeneous applicant pools or screen applicants in a discriminatory manner.

The Department should strive to facilitate and expedite the screening and testing process, and should periodically inform each candidate of his/her status in the recruiting process.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Recruitment and Selection*

---

### **1000.4 SELECTION PROCESS**

The [Department/Office] shall actively strive to identify a diverse group of candidates that have in some manner distinguished themselves as being outstanding prospects. Minimally, the [Department/Office] should employ a comprehensive screening, background investigation and selection process that assesses cognitive and physical abilities and includes review and verification of the following:

- (a) A comprehensive application for employment (including previous employment, references, current and prior addresses, education, military record)
- (b) Driving record
- (c) Reference checks
- (d) Employment eligibility, including U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Employment Eligibility Verification Form I-9 and acceptable identity and employment authorization documents consistent with Labor Code § 1019.1. This required documentation should not be requested until a candidate is hired. This does not prohibit obtaining documents required for other purposes.
- (e) Information obtained from public internet sites
- (f) Financial history consistent with the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) (15 USC § 1681 et seq.)
- (g) Local, state and federal criminal history record checks
- (h) Lie detector test (when legally permissible) (Labor Code § 432.2)
- (i) Medical and psychological examination (may only be given after a conditional offer of employment)
- (j) Review board or selection committee assessment

#### **1000.4.1 VETERAN'S PREFERENCE**

Qualifying veterans of the United States Armed Forces who receive a passing score on an entrance examination shall be ranked in the top rank of any resulting eligibility list. The veteran's preference shall also apply to a widow or widower of a veteran or a spouse of a 100 percent disabled veteran (Government Code § 18973.1).

### **1000.5 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION**

Every candidate shall undergo a thorough background investigation to verify his/her personal integrity and high ethical standards, and to identify any past behavior that may be indicative of the candidate's unsuitability to perform duties relevant to the operation of the Merced County Sheriff's Office (11 CCR 1953).

The narrative report and any other relevant background information shall be shared with the psychological evaluator. Information shall also be shared with others involved in the hiring process if it is relevant to their respective evaluations (11 CCR 1953).

The background report review process should be reviewed through the chain of command for which the applicant is to be potentially employed.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Recruitment and Selection*

---

#### 1000.5.1 NOTICES

Background investigators shall ensure that investigations are conducted and notices provided in accordance with the requirements of the FCRA and the California Investigative Consumer Reporting Agencies Act (15 USC § 1681d; Civil Code § 1786.16).

#### 1000.5.2 STATE NOTICES

If information disclosed in a candidate's criminal offender record information (CORI) is the basis for an adverse employment decision, a copy of the CORI shall be provided to the applicant (Penal Code § 11105).

#### 1000.5.3 REVIEW OF SOCIAL MEDIA SITES

Due to the potential for accessing unsubstantiated, private or protected information, the hiring authority shall not require candidates to provide passwords, account information or access to password-protected social media accounts (Labor Code § 980).

The hiring authority should consider utilizing the services of an appropriately trained and experienced third party to conduct open source, Internet-based searches and/or review information from social media sites to ensure that:

- (a) The legal rights of candidates are protected.
- (b) Material and information to be considered are verified, accurate and validated.
- (c) The Department fully complies with applicable privacy protections and local, state and federal law.

Regardless of whether a third party is used, the hiring authority should ensure that potentially impermissible information is not available to any person involved in the candidate selection process.

#### 1000.5.4 DOCUMENTING AND REPORTING

The background investigator shall summarize the results of the background investigation in a narrative report that includes sufficient information to allow the reviewing authority to decide whether to extend a conditional offer of employment. The report shall not include any information that is prohibited from use, including that from social media sites, in making employment decisions. The report and all supporting documentation shall be included in the candidate's background investigation file (11 CCR 1953).

#### 1000.5.5 RECORDS RETENTION

The background report and all supporting documentation shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule established by the County of Merced.

#### 1000.5.6 BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION UPDATE

A background investigation update may, at the discretion of the Sheriff, be conducted in lieu of a complete new background investigation on a peace officer candidate who is reappointed within 180 days of voluntary separation from the Merced County Sheriff's Office or is transferred to a different department within the County as provided in 11 CCR 1953(f).

## *Recruitment and Selection*

---

### **1000.6 DISQUALIFICATION GUIDELINES**

As a general rule, performance indicators and candidate information and records shall be evaluated by considering the candidate as a whole, and taking into consideration the following:

- Age at the time the behavior occurred
- Passage of time
- Patterns of past behavior
- Severity of behavior
- Probable consequences if past behavior is repeated or made public
- Likelihood of recurrence
- Relevance of past behavior to public safety employment
- Aggravating and mitigating factors
- Other relevant considerations

A candidate's qualifications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, using a totality-of-the-circumstances framework.

### **1000.7 EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS**

All candidates shall meet the minimum standards required by state law (Government Code § 1029; Government Code § 1031; 11 CCR 1950 et seq.). Candidates will be evaluated based on merit, ability, competence and experience, in accordance with the high standards of integrity and ethics valued by the [Department/Office] and the community. The California Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) developed a Job Dimensions list, which is used as a professional standard in background investigations.

Validated, job-related and nondiscriminatory employment standards shall be established for each job classification and shall minimally identify the training, abilities, knowledge and skills required to perform the position's essential duties in a satisfactory manner. Each standard should include performance indicators for candidate evaluation. The Department of Human Resources should maintain validated standards for all positions.

#### **1000.7.1 STANDARDS FOR DEPUTIES**

Candidates shall meet the minimum standards established by POST (Government Code § 1029; Government Code § 1031; 11 CCR 1950 et seq.):

- (a) Free of any felony convictions
- (b) Citizen of the United States, or permanent resident alien eligible for and has applied for citizenship
- (c) At least 18 years of age
- (d) Fingerprinted for local, state and national fingerprint check

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Recruitment and Selection*

---

- (e) Good moral character as determined by a thorough background investigation (11 CCR 1953)
- (f) High school graduate, passed the GED or other high school equivalency test or obtained a two year, four year or advanced degree from an accredited or approved institution
- (g) Free from any physical, emotional or mental condition which might adversely affect the exercise of police powers (11 CCR 1954; 11 CCR 1955)
- (h) Candidates must also satisfy the POST selection requirements, including (11 CCR 1950 et seq.):
  - 1. Reading and writing ability assessment (11 CCR 1951)
  - 2. Oral interview to determine suitability for law enforcement service (11 CCR 1952)

In addition to the above minimum POST required standards, candidates may be subjected to additional standards established by the [Department/Office] (Penal Code § 13510(d)).

#### 1000.7.2 STANDARDS FOR [DISPATCHER]

Candidates shall satisfy the POST selection requirements, including (11 CCR 1956):

- (a) A verbal, reasoning, memory and perceptual abilities assessment (11 CCR 1957)
- (b) An oral communication assessment (11 CCR 1958)
- (c) A medical evaluation (11 CCR 1960)

## Evaluation of Employees

### 1002.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Department's employee performance evaluation system is designed to record work performance for both the Department and the employee, providing recognition for good work and developing a guide for improvement.

### 1002.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office utilizes a performance evaluation report to measure performance and to use as a factor in making personnel decisions that relate to merit increases, promotion, reassignment, discipline, demotion and termination. The evaluation report is intended to serve as a guide for work planning and review by the supervisor and employee. It gives supervisors a way to create an objective history of work performance based on job standards.

The Department evaluates employees in a non-discriminatory manner based upon job-related factors specific to the employee's position, without regard to sex, race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability or other protected classes.

### 1002.3 EVALUATION FREQUENCY

Employees are evaluated based on the following chart:

Position	Evaluated Every 3 Months	Evaluated Yearly	Length of Probation
Probationary Full Time Deputy Sheriffs	X	X	18 Months
Probationary Full Time Correctional Officers	X	X	12 Months
Non-Probationary Sworn Employees		X	
Probationary Civilian Employees	X		*
Non-Probationary, Civilian Employees		X	

\*Refer to County of Merced Human Resources policy for probation duration lengths of respective positions.

#### 1002.3.1 RESERVE DEPUTY EVALUATIONS

Reserve deputy evaluations are covered under the Reserve Deputies Policy.

## *Evaluation of Employees*

---

### **1002.4 FULL TIME PROBATIONARY PERSONNEL**

Civilian personnel on probation are subject to the Merced County Human Resources Department rules and regulations. Each civilian position has a different probationary period depending on the respective job title and responsibilities of that position.

Sworn personnel are on probation for 12 months before being eligible for certification as permanent employees. Probationary deputies are evaluated every three (3) months).

### **1002.5 FULL-TIME PERMANENT STATUS PERSONNEL**

Permanent employees are subject to three types of performance evaluations:

**Regular** - An Employee Performance Evaluation shall be completed once each year by the employee's immediate supervisor on the anniversary of the employee's date of hire except for employees who have been promoted in which case an Employee Performance Evaluation shall be completed on the anniversary of the employee's date of last promotion.

**Transfer** - If an employee is transferred from one assignment to another in the middle of an evaluation period and less than six months have transpired since the transfer, then an evaluation shall be completed by the current supervisor with input from the previous supervisor.

**Special** - A special evaluation may be completed any time the rater and the rater's supervisor feel one is necessary due to employee performance that is deemed less than standard. Generally, the special evaluation will be the tool used to demonstrate those areas of performance deemed less than standard when follow-up action is planned (action plan, remedial training, retraining, etc.). The evaluation form and the attached documentation shall be submitted as one package.

#### **1002.5.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

- Performance Evaluations must be completed on all permanent employees one time per year. The due date for the evaluation is the employee's full time anniversary date, every year. Performance Evaluations for employees are very important and are to be completed on time.
- Pursuant to the Merced County Regulations, the burden is on the respective supervisor to complete the evaluation and notify the employee prior to its due date. Performance Evaluation completion for an employee will be the responsibility of the supervisor who is supervising that employee on their respective anniversary date, regardless of duration.
- It is the responsibility of the supervisor completing the evaluation to consult with other supervisors on the performance of that employee.

#### **1002.5.2 RATINGS**

When completing the Employee Performance Evaluation, the rater will place a check mark in the column that best describes the employee's performance. The definition of each rating category is as follows:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Evaluation of Employees*

---

Excellent - Is actual performance well beyond that required for the position. It is exceptional performance, definitely superior or extraordinary.

Good (Exceeds Standards/Above Average)-The employee's work performance is mostly or consistently above the level of a satisfactory employee or better.

Meets Standards - Is the performance of a fully competent employee. It means satisfactory performance that consistently meets the standards required of the position.

Weak (Needs Improvement) - Is a level of performance less than that expected of a fully competent employee and less than standards required of the position. A needs improvement rating must be thoroughly discussed with the employee.

Unsatisfactory - The employee's work performance is inadequate and definitely inferior to the standards of performance required for the position. Performance at this level cannot be allowed to continue. If performance needs improvement, it is unsatisfactory.

Space for written comments is provided at the end of the evaluation in the rater comments section. This section allows the rater to document the employee's strengths, weaknesses, and suggestions for improvement. Any rating under any job dimension marked unsatisfactory or outstanding shall be substantiated in the rater comments section.

#### **1002.6 EVALUATION INTERVIEW**

When the supervisor has completed the preliminary evaluation, arrangements may be made for a private discussion of the evaluation with the employee. The supervisor should discuss the results of the just completed rating period and clarify any questions the employee may have. If the employee has valid and reasonable protests of any of the ratings, the supervisor may make appropriate changes to the evaluation. Areas needing improvement and goals for reaching the expected level of performance should be identified and discussed. The supervisor should also provide relevant counseling regarding advancement, specialty positions and training opportunities. The supervisor and employee will sign and date the evaluation. Permanent employees may also write comments in the Employee Comments section of the performance evaluation report.

##### **1002.6.1 DISCRIMINATORY HARASSMENT FORM**

At the time of each employee's annual evaluation, the reviewing supervisor shall require the employee to read the County and Department harassment and discrimination policies. Following such policy review, the supervisor shall provide the employee a form to be completed and returned by the employee certifying the following:

- (a) That the employee understands the harassment and discrimination policies.
- (b) Whether any questions the employee has have been sufficiently addressed.
- (c) That the employee knows how and where to report harassment policy violations.
- (d) Whether the employee has been the subject of, or witness to, any conduct that violates the discrimination or harassment policy which has not been previously reported.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Evaluation of Employees*

---

The completed form should be returned to the supervisor (or other authorized individual if the employee is uncomfortable returning the form to the presenting supervisor) within one week.

The employee's completed answers shall be attached to the evaluation. If the employee has expressed any questions or concerns, the receiving supervisor or other authorized individual shall insure that appropriate follow up action is taken.

#### **1002.7 EVALUATION REVIEW**

After the supervisor finishes the discussion with the employee, the signed performance evaluation is forwarded to the rater's supervisor. The employee's division captain shall review the evaluation for fairness, impartiality, uniformity, and consistency. The respective division captain shall evaluate the supervisor on the quality of evaluations performed.

#### **1002.8 EVALUATION DISTRIBUTION**

The original performance evaluation shall be maintained in the employee's personnel file in the office of the Sheriff for the tenure of the employee's employment. A copy will be given to the employee and a copy will be forwarded to County Department of Human Resources.

## Promotional and Transfer Policy

### 1004.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish required and desirable qualifications for promotion within the ranks of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

#### 1004.1.1 GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following factors will be used in evaluating employees for promotion or transfer to a specialty assignment:

- (a) Presents a professional appearance in conformance with established standards of the Department;
- (b) The employee maintains a physical condition which aids in their performance;
- (c) The employee possesses the appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of the policies and procedures of the Department necessary to function in the position that is the subject of the promotion or transfer.
- (d) The employee possesses the appropriate level of knowledge and understanding of the applicable statutes and case law necessary to function in the position that is the subject of the promotion or transfer.
- (e) The employee possesses
- (f) Demonstrates the following:
  - 1. Emotional stability and maturity
  - 2. Stress tolerance
  - 3. Sound judgment and decision making
  - 4. Personal integrity and ethical conduct
  - 5. Honesty
  - 6. Leadership
  - 7. Initiative
  - 8. Adaptability and flexibility
  - 9. Ability to conform to organizational goals and objectives in a positive manner

### 1004.2 SWORN NON-SUPERVISORY SELECTION PROCESS

The following positions are considered transfers and are not considered promotion

- (a) Detective
- (b) Deputy

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Promotional and Transfer Policy*

---

- (c) Deputies assigned to specialized investigative units (e.g. STAR, HIDTA, etc.)
- (d) School Resource Officer
- (e) Gang Deputy
- (f) Public Information Officer
- (g) Canine Handler

#### 1004.2.1 DESIRABLE QUALIFICATIONS

The following qualifications may apply to consideration for transfer:

- (a) Three years experience
- (b) Off probation
- (c) Has shown an expressed interest in the position applied for
- (d) Education, training and demonstrated abilities in related areas; such as, enforcement activities, investigative techniques, report writing, public relations, etc.
- (e) Complete any training required by POST or law

#### 1004.3 TRANSFERS: SELECTION PROCESS-NON-MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

The following criteria apply to transfers.

- (a) Administrative evaluation as determined by the Sheriff. This shall include a review of supervisor recommendations. Each supervisor who has supervised or otherwise been involved with the candidate will submit these recommendations.
- (b) The supervisor recommendations will be submitted to the division captain for whom the candidate will work. The division captain may schedule interviews with each candidate. The division captain will then approve or deny the transfer request.
- (c) Appointment by the Sheriff

The policy and procedures for all positions may be waived for temporary assignments, emergency situations or for training.

#### 1004.4 PROMOTIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

Specifications for promotional opportunities are on file with the Merced County Sheriff's Department and the county's Department of Human Resources.

##### 1004.4.1 PROMOTIONS: SELECTION PROCESS-NON-MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

The following criteria apply to promotions.

- (a) Administrative evaluation and procedure as determined by the Sheriff. Depending on the promotion level, the procedure shall include a review of the applicable supervisor and captain recommendations.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Promotional and Transfer Policy*

---

(b) Each supervisor who has supervised or otherwise been involved with the candidate will submit these recommendations to the division captain for whom the candidate will work. The division captain may schedule interviews with each candidate.

(c) Depending on the promotion level, there may be multiple interviews consisting of either an individual interviewer or a panel of interviewers. The interviewing authority will then submit recommendations to the Sheriff.

(d) Appointment by the Sheriff

## Grievance Procedure

### 1006.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of this department that all grievances be handled quickly and fairly without discrimination against employees who file a grievance whether or not there is a basis for the grievance. Our Department's philosophy is to promote a free verbal communication between employees and supervisors. This policy is established in accordance with the County's Human Resources Rules and Regulations (Sections 10 & 11). This procedure is hereby established to permit systematic consideration of an individual employee grievance. The object of this procedure is to resolve grievances as informally as possible and within the organization, unit, and level in which the grievance has arisen. It is the intent of the parties to resolve grievances at the lowest practicable level and as promptly as possible. The Grievance Procedure is intended to assure a grieving employee the right to present his/her grievance without fear of disciplinary action or reprisal by his/her supervisor or department head.

#### 1006.1.1 GRIEVANCE DEFINED

1. A grievance is an alleged violation of a County or departmental policy, procedure, established practice, or provision of an MOU by a grievant's department, supervisor, or other County management employee. A grievant is an employee who declares they have been adversely affected by the alleged violation.

2. Grievances may be brought by an individual affected employee or by a group representative.

The following are excluded from the Grievance Procedure:

a. Dismissals, suspensions, demotions, disciplinary salary reductions, recruitment and selection issues, reclassifications and other matters that have other means of appeals.

b. Those employees subject to State Regulations, who shall use the appropriate complaint procedure.

c. Counseling memos or employee performance evaluations, except performance evaluations which result in a denial of a merit step increase. Such case is not discipline and the employee retains the burden of proof.

d. Meet and Confer Items or unfair labor charges. Such items will be handled through the Meet and Confer process and/or filed as unfair labor practices with the Public Employee Relations Board (PERB).

3. Final determination on a grievance's applicability under this Section or the EERP shall rest with the County Executive Officer or his/her designee.

### 1006.2 SUBMISSION OF GRIEVANCE

1. Any individual employee shall have the right to present a grievance. If the grievance involves a group of employees or if a number of employees file separate grievances on the same matter, the grievance will be handled as a single grievance. 2. Any Union or Association may elect not to

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Grievance Procedure*

---

represent non-dues/fee paying members. If the grievance is taken to the Administrative Hearing Officer level, the decision of the Administrative Hearing Officer shall not be used to establish a precedent if the Union or Association elected not to represent the employee or group of employees.

#### **1006.3 INFORMAL PROCESS**

a. If an employee feels that he or she has a grievance relating to his/her work situation, he/she shall verbally present his/her grievance to the immediate supervisor within ten (10) working days from the occurrence that gave rise to the grievance, or ten (10) working days of when the employee knew or reasonably should have known of such occurrence.

b. The immediate supervisor shall meet with the employee within five (5) working days after the grievance is presented to discuss the grievance in an effort to clarify the issue and to cooperatively work toward a settlement.

c. The immediate supervisor shall verbally present his/her decision no later than five (5) working days after the informal discussion. If it is the judgment of any management representative that he/she does not have the authority to resolve the grievance, he/she may refer the grievance to the next level in the procedure.

d. The employee may request the assistance of another person of his/her choosing to act as a representative during the informal discussion, or he/she may be represented by a recognized employee organization of which he/she is a member. The employee and his/her representative may use a maximum of thirty (30) minutes of work time to prepare the informal grievance.

e. Grievances not resolved or responded to in the informal process may be advanced to the formal process.

f. Upon written consent of both parties to a grievance, the time limitations at any level in the procedure may be extended.

g. By written mutual agreement between the parties, a grievance, may revert to a prior level for reconsideration.

#### **1006.4 FORMAL PROCESS**

a. If the matter is still unresolved the employee and his/her representative may then schedule a grievance resolution meeting to discuss the grievance with the employee's department head or his/her designee.

b. Formal grievances shall be timely submitted in writing on the Merced County Grievance Form.

c. The employee may request the assistance of another person of his/her choosing to act as a representative in the formal grievance procedure, or the employee may be represented by a recognized employee organization of which he/she is a member.

d. The employee and his/her representative may use a maximum of one (1) hour of work time to prepare the formal grievance form. The completed formal grievance form shall be forwarded to the employee's department head or designee.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Grievance Procedure*

---

- e. The department head or their designee shall immediately schedule a grievance resolution meeting to be held within five (5) working days of the employee's request.
- f. A Human Resources Department representative may be requested to attend the meeting and act as a neutral third party to facilitate a resolution to the grievance. Every reasonable effort shall be made to find an acceptable resolution by informal means at this level.
- g. The department head or designee shall enter his/her decision and comments in writing and return the original grievance form to the employee within five (5) working days after the grievance resolution meeting.
- h. If the written decision of the department head or designee does not resolve the grievance, the employee may, within ten (10) working days after receipt of the written response, file the original grievance form with the Human Resources Department. Unresolved formal grievances shall be heard by an Administrative Hearing Officer, pursuant to Section 9 of the Merced County Human Resources Rules and Regulations.
- i. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure a copy of his/her completed grievance form is delivered and a written acknowledgement of receipt is provided by County Human Resources within the above time frames.
- j. Any grievance not initiated or pursued within the time limits of the steps, will be considered settled on the basis of the last timely answer by the employer. Failure by the employer to meet the time limits allows the grievance to proceed to the next step of the grievance process.
- k. The parties may mutually agree in writing to waive the time frames.
- l. If an employee does not present his/her grievance, attend scheduled Administrative Hearing Officer hearings, or does not appeal the decision rendered regarding his/her grievance within the prescribed time limits, the grievance shall be considered resolved.

#### 1006.4.1 ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING OFFICER

- a. The Administrative Hearing Officer shall schedule a hearing date within thirty (30) days of selection. It is understood that the thirty (30) days referenced in this section "a" refers to the act of calendaring the hearing and does not mean the date of the hearing shall occur within the thirty (30) days. The Administrative Hearing Officer shall render a written decision within sixty (60) days of the close of the hearing. Time frame may be extended by written mutual agreement by the parties. The Administrative Hearing Officer's decision shall be in accordance with California Code of Civil Procedures Section 1094.5 requirements. The Administrative Hearing Officer shall have no authority to add to, delete, or alter any provision of the MOU or County Human Resources Rules and Regulations and shall make no decisions in violation of existing law. Copies of the decision will be furnished to all parties.
- b. The written Notice of Decision and Findings of the Administrative Hearing Officer shall be final for purposes of internal administrative exhaustion. Administrative Hearing Officer decisions are not advisory decisions or recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for their further action.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Grievance Procedure*

---

c. A party seeking to challenge the final decision of the Administrative Hearing Officer in superior or district court must file a petition in a court of competent jurisdiction within ninety (90) days after the Notice of Decision and Findings is mailed to the employee or will otherwise be considered to have waived the right to do so. (Code Civ. Proc. Section 1094.6.)

d. The procedures, hearing, and/or the Administrative Hearing Officer's written decision provided for under this Section or under these Rules and Regulations shall not be used or interpreted as an agreement of the parties to final and binding arbitration under California Code of Civil Procedure 1280 et seq. (California Arbitration Act). Both parties retain the right to seek judicial review, upon the full evidentiary merits of the Administrative record and the Administrative Hearing Officer's written decision (pursuant to Code of Civil Procedure 1094.5). Neither party agrees to binding arbitration.

e. An employee who chooses not to exercise his/her right to appeal the imposition of discipline pursuant to this Section shall be barred from appealing the imposition of such discipline in superior or district court for failure to exhaust administrative remedies. This shall include any employee who chooses to prematurely terminate grievance proceedings before the Administrative Hearing Officer has issued the Notice of Decision.

### 1006.4.2 MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES GRIEVANCE AND APPEALS PROCEDURE

Notwithstanding anything said to the contrary herein, the following procedure shall apply to regular County employees who have been officially designated as management, except employees represented by Bargaining Unit 30 Law Enforcement Sergeants.

A. B, C, D, and E level management employees shall follow the same procedure and rules as set forth herein for non management. The County shall have the option to process and set the grievance or appeal hearing for non-represented managers with either American Arbitration Association (AAA) or State Mediation Conciliation Services (SMCS). The decision of the External Hearing Officer shall be final and binding.

B. A level management the decision of the appointing authority shall be final and binding.

C. Employees appointed to Employment At-Will status are excluded from the Management Employees Grievance and Appeals procedure.

# Reporting of Employee Convictions

## **1010.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Convictions of certain offenses may restrict or prohibit an employee's ability to properly perform official duties. Therefore, all employees shall be required to promptly notify the Department of any past and current criminal convictions.

The Training Manager shall submit in a timely manner a notice to the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) of any appointment, termination, reinstatement, name change or status change regarding any peace officer, reserve peace officer, public safety dispatcher and records supervisor employed by this department (11 CCR § 1003).

The Training Manager shall submit in a timely manner a notice to POST of a felony conviction or Government Code § 1029 reason that disqualifies any current peace officer employed by this department or any former peace officer if this department was responsible for the investigation (11 CCR § 1003).

## **1010.2 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CONVICTIONS, OUTSTANDING WARRANTS AND RESTRAINING ORDERS**

California and federal law prohibit individuals convicted of, or having an outstanding warrant for, certain offenses and individuals subject to certain court orders from lawfully possessing a firearm. Such convictions and court orders often involve allegations of the use or attempted use of force or threatened use of a weapon on any individual in a domestic relationship (e.g., spouse, cohabitant, parent, child) (18 USC § 922; Penal Code § 29805).

All members are responsible for ensuring that they have not been disqualified from possessing a firearm by any such conviction or court order and shall promptly report any such conviction or court order to a supervisor, as provided in this policy.

## **1010.3 OTHER CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS AND COURT ORDERS**

Government Code § 1029 prohibits any person convicted of a felony from being a peace officer in the State of California. This prohibition applies regardless of whether the guilt was established by way of a verdict, guilty or nolo contendere plea.

Convictions of certain violations of the Vehicle Code and other provisions of law may also place restrictions on an employee's ability to fully perform the duties of the job.

Outstanding warrants as provided in Penal Code § 29805 also place restrictions on a member's ability to possess a firearm.

Moreover, while legal restrictions may or may not be imposed by statute or by the courts upon conviction of any criminal offense, criminal conduct by members of this [department/office] may be inherently in conflict with law enforcement duties and the public trust.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Reporting of Employee Convictions*

---

### **1010.4 REPORTING PROCEDURE**

All members of this [department/office] and all retired deputies with an identification card issued by the [Department/Office] shall promptly notify their immediate supervisor (or the Sheriff in the case of retired deputies) in writing of any past or current criminal arrest, outstanding warrant or conviction regardless of whether or not the matter is currently on appeal and regardless of the penalty or sentence, if any.

All members and all retired deputies with an identification card issued by the [Department/Office] shall further promptly notify their immediate supervisor (or the Sheriff in the case of retired deputies) in writing if the member or retiree becomes the subject of a domestic violence restraining order or similar court order or becomes the subject of an outstanding warrant.

Any member whose criminal conviction unduly restricts or prohibits that member from fully and properly performing his/her duties may be disciplined including, but not limited to, being placed on administrative leave, reassignment and/or termination. Any effort to remove such disqualification or restriction shall remain entirely the responsibility of the member on his/her own time and expense.

Any member failing to provide prompt written notice pursuant to this policy shall be subject to discipline.

### **1010.5 PROCEDURE FOR RELIEF**

Pursuant to Penal Code § 29855, a peace officer may petition the court for permission to carry a firearm following a conviction under state law. Federal law, however, does not provide for any such similar judicial relief and the granting of a state court petition under Penal Code § 29855 will not relieve one of the restrictions imposed by federal law. Therefore, relief for any employee falling under the restrictions imposed by federal law may only be obtained by expungement of the conviction. Each employee shall seek relief from firearm restrictions on their own time and through their own resources.

Pursuant to Family Code § 6389(h), an individual may petition the court for an exemption to any restraining order, which would thereafter permit the individual to carry a firearm as a part of their employment. Relief from any domestic violence or other restriction shall also be pursued through the employee's own resources and on the employee's own time.

Pending satisfactory proof of relief from any legal restriction imposed on an employee's duties, the employee may be placed on administrative leave, reassigned or disciplined. The [Department/Office] may, but is not required to return an employee to any assignment, reinstate any employee or reverse any pending or imposed discipline upon presentation of satisfactory proof of relief from any legal restriction set forth in this policy.

## Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace

### 1012.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish clear and uniform guidelines regarding drugs and alcohol in the workplace.

### 1012.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this [department/office] to provide a drug- and alcohol-free workplace for all members.

### 1012.3 GENERAL GUIDELINES

Alcohol and drug use in the workplace or on [department/office] time can endanger the health and safety of [department/office] members and the public. Such use shall not be tolerated (41 USC § 8103).

Members who have consumed an amount of an alcoholic beverage or taken any medication, or combination thereof, that would tend to adversely affect their mental or physical abilities shall not report for duty. Affected members shall notify the Patrol Lieutenant or appropriate supervisor as soon as the member is aware that he/she will not be able to report to work. If the member is unable to make the notification, every effort should be made to have a representative contact the supervisor in a timely manner. If the member is adversely affected while on-duty, he/she shall be immediately removed and released from work (see Work Restrictions in this policy).

#### 1012.3.1 USE OF MEDICATIONS

Members should avoid taking any medications that will impair their ability to safely and completely perform their duties. Any member who is medically required or has a need to take any such medication shall report that need to his/her immediate supervisor prior to commencing any on-duty status.

No member shall be permitted to work or drive a vehicle owned or leased by the [Department/Office] while taking any medication that has the potential to impair his/her abilities, without a written release from his/her physician.

#### 1012.3.2 USE OF MARIJUANA

Possession of marijuana, including medical marijuana, or being under the influence of marijuana on- or off-duty is prohibited and may lead to disciplinary action.

### 1012.4 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Members shall report for work in an appropriate mental and physical condition. Members are prohibited from purchasing, manufacturing, distributing, dispensing, possessing or using controlled substances or alcohol on [department/office] premises or on [department/office] time (41 USC § 8103). The lawful possession or use of prescribed medications or over-the-counter remedies is excluded from this prohibition.

## *Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace*

---

Members who are authorized to consume alcohol as part of a special assignment shall not do so to the extent of impairing on-duty performance.

Members shall notify a supervisor immediately if they observe behavior or other evidence that they believe demonstrates that a fellow member poses a risk to the health and safety of the member or others due to drug or alcohol use.

Members are required to notify their immediate supervisors of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction (41 USC § 8103).

### **1012.5 EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

There may be available a voluntary employee assistance program to assist those who wish to seek help for alcohol and drug problems (41 USC § 8103). Insurance coverage that provides treatment for drug and alcohol abuse also may be available. Employees should contact the Department of Human Resources, their insurance providers or the employee assistance program for additional information. It is the responsibility of each employee to seek assistance before alcohol or drug problems lead to performance problems.

### **1012.6 WORK RESTRICTIONS**

If a member informs a supervisor that he/she has consumed any alcohol, drug or medication that could interfere with a safe and efficient job performance, the member may be required to obtain clearance from his/her physician before continuing to work.

If the supervisor reasonably believes, based on objective facts, that a member is impaired by the consumption of alcohol or other drugs, the supervisor shall prevent the member from continuing work and shall ensure that he/she is safely transported away from the [department/office].

### **1012.7 REQUESTING SCREENING TESTS**

The supervisor may request an employee to submit to a screening test under the following circumstances:

- (a) The supervisor reasonably believes, based upon objective facts, that the employee is under the influence of alcohol or drugs that are impairing his/her ability to perform duties safely and efficiently.
- (b) The employee discharges a firearm, other than by accident, in the performance of his/her duties.
- (c) During the performance of his/her duties, the employee drives a motor vehicle and becomes involved in an incident that results in bodily injury to him/herself or another person, or substantial damage to property.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Drug- and Alcohol-Free Workplace*

---

### 1012.7.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY

The supervisor shall prepare a written record documenting the specific facts that led to the decision to request the test, and shall inform the employee in writing of the following:

- (a) The test will be given to detect either alcohol or drugs, or both.
- (b) The result of the test is not admissible in any criminal proceeding against the employee.
- (c) The employee may refuse the test, but refusal may result in dismissal or other disciplinary action.

### 1012.7.2 SCREENING TEST REFUSAL

An employee may be subject to disciplinary action if he/she:

- (a) Fails or refuses to submit to a screening test as requested.
- (b) After taking a screening test that indicates the presence of a controlled substance, fails to provide proof, within 72 hours after being requested, that he/she took the controlled substance as directed, pursuant to a current and lawful prescription issued in his/her name.
- (c) Violates any provisions of this policy.

### 1012.8 COMPLIANCE WITH THE DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE ACT

No later than 30 days following notice of any drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace involving a member, the [Department/Office] will take appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and/or requiring the member to satisfactorily participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program (41 USC § 8104).

### 1012.9 CONFIDENTIALITY

The [Department/Office] recognizes the confidentiality and privacy due to its members. Disclosure of any information relating to substance abuse treatment, except on a need-to-know basis, shall only be with the express written consent of the member involved or pursuant to lawful process.

The written results of any screening tests and all documents generated by the employee assistance program are considered confidential medical records and shall be maintained separately from the employee's other personnel files.

# REPORTING OFF-DUTY CONTACT WITH OUTSIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

## 1013.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

When departmental employees are contacted by an outside law enforcement agency or initiate contact with an outside law enforcement agency, such contacts have the potential for that agency to contact this department for additional information or to advise this department of such contacts. Further, such contacts could require additional investigation by that agency and require this department's assistance. This policy provides guidance regarding the circumstances under which an employee is responsible for notifying the department of such contacts.

### 1013.1.1 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Not all circumstances under which an employee must notify the department when coming into off-duty contact with an outside law enforcement agency or other governmental agency can be listed; however, an employee should notify his/her supervisor as soon as feasible when such contact occurs. Circumstances which require employee notification to the department include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Stopped for a traffic violation
2. Failure to pay child support
3. Witness to a crime which is reported or should be reported
4. Any notification from a law enforcement or governmental agency advising the employee that s/he is alleged to have violated any law

## Sick Leave

### 1014.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides general guidance regarding the use and processing of sick leave. The accrual and terms of use of sick leave for eligible employees are detailed in the County personnel manual or applicable collective bargaining agreement.

This policy is not intended to cover all types of sick or other leaves. For example, employees may be entitled to additional paid or unpaid leave for certain family and medical reasons as provided for in the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (29 USC § 2601 et seq.) and the California Family Rights Act, and leave related to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or for organ or bone marrow donor procedures (29 CFR 825; Government Code § 12945.2; Labor Code § 230.1; Labor Code § 1510).

### 1014.2 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Sick leave may be used for absences caused by illness, injury, diagnosis, care or treatment for existing health conditions, temporary disability (including pregnancy/maternity), or for medical, dental or vision exams or medical treatment of the employee or the employee's immediate family when it is not possible to schedule such appointments during non-working hours.

Sick leave is not considered vacation, and abuse of sick leave may result in discipline and/or denial of sick-leave benefits. Employees on sick leave shall not engage in other employment or self-employment, or participate in any sport, hobby, recreational or other activity which may impede recovery from the injury or illness.

Upon return to work, employees shall complete and submit a leave request describing the type of leave used and the specific amount of time taken.

#### 1014.2.1 NOTIFICATION

Employees are encouraged to notify their appropriate supervisor as soon as they are aware that they will not be able to report to work. At a minimum, employees shall make such notification no less than one hour before the start of their scheduled shift. If an employee is unable to contact the supervisor in the case of an emergency, every effort should be made to have a representative contact the supervisor (Labor Code § 246).

When the necessity for leave is foreseeable, such as an expected birth or planned medical treatment, the employee shall, whenever possible, provide the Department with no less than 30-days notice of the intent to take leave (Labor Code § 246).

### 1014.3 EXTENDED ILLNESS

Employees on extended absences shall, if possible, contact their unit supervisor at three-day intervals to provide an update on their absence and expected date of return. Employees absent from duty due to personal illness in excess of five consecutive days may be required to furnish

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Sick Leave*

---

a statement from their health care provider supporting the use of sick leave and/or the ability to return to work.

Merced County Rules and Regulations section 2.F.6 specifically states when an employee is absent for more than five (5) consecutive work days (or 40 consecutive work hours as per alternate work schedule), the employee shall present a statement by the employee's physician releasing the employee for normal duty. If such statement is not provided by the employee, the department head may require an immediate examination by the Health Officer, relating to the illnesses or injuries which caused the absence, prior to permitting the employee to return to work.

Nothing in this section precludes a supervisor, with cause, from requiring a health care provider's statement if three or fewer sick days are taken after the first three days of paid sick leave are used in a 12-month period.

#### **1014.4 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITY**

Supervisors should monitor sick leave usage and regularly review the attendance of employees under their command to ensure that the use of sick leave is consistent with this policy. Supervisors should address sick-leave use in the employee's performance evaluation when it has negatively affected the employee's performance or ability to complete assigned duties, and when unusual amounts of sick leave by the employee has had a negative impact on department operations. When appropriate, supervisors should counsel employees regarding the excessive use of sick leave and should consider referring the employee to the Employee Assistance Program.

#### **1014.5 REQUIRED NOTICES**

The Director of Administrative Services shall ensure:

- (a) Written notice of the amount of paid sick leave available is provided to employees as provided in Labor Code § 246.
- (b) A poster is displayed in a conspicuous place for employees to review that contains information on paid sick leave as provided in Labor Code § 247.

## Employee Personal Contact Information

### **1015.1 UPDATING REQUIREMENT**

Employees are required to provide and maintain current information of their address and phone number with the Department. Employees are required to notify the Department within 24 hours of any change in residence address, home phone number, cell phone number, and to provide accurate and reasonably reliable means or methods for contact.

# Communicable Diseases

## 1016.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides general guidelines to assist in minimizing the risk of [department/office] members contracting and/or spreading communicable diseases.

### 1016.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Communicable disease** - A human disease caused by microorganisms that are present in and transmissible through human blood, bodily fluid, tissue, or by breathing or coughing. These diseases commonly include, but are not limited to, hepatitis B virus (HBV), HIV and tuberculosis.

**Exposure** - When an eye, mouth, mucous membrane or non-intact skin comes into contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, or when these substances are injected or infused under the skin; when an individual is exposed to a person who has a disease that can be passed through the air by talking, sneezing or coughing (e.g., tuberculosis), or the individual is in an area that was occupied by such a person. Exposure only includes those instances that occur due to a member's position at the Merced County Sheriff's Office. (See the exposure control plan for further details to assist in identifying whether an exposure has occurred.)

## 1016.2 EXPOSURE CONTROL OFFICER

The Sheriff will assign a person as the Exposure Control Officer (ECO). The ECO shall develop an exposure control plan that includes:

- (a) Exposure-prevention and decontamination procedures.
- (b) Procedures for when and how to obtain medical attention in the event of an exposure or suspected exposure.
- (c) The provision that [department/office] members will have no-cost access to the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., gloves, face masks, eye protection, pocket masks) for each member's position and risk of exposure.
- (d) Evaluation of persons in custody for any exposure risk and measures to separate them (15 CCR 1051; 15 CCR 1207).
- (e) Compliance with all relevant laws or regulations related to communicable diseases, including:
  1. Responding to requests and notifications regarding exposures covered under the Ryan White law (42 USC § 300ff-133; 42 USC § 300ff-136).
  2. Bloodborne pathogen mandates including (8 CCR 5193):
    - (a) Sharps injury log.
    - (b) Needleless systems and sharps injury protection.
  3. Airborne transmissible disease mandates including (8 CCR 5199):

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Communicable Diseases*

---

- (a) Engineering and work practice controls related to airborne transmissible diseases.
  - (b) Distribution of appropriate personal protective equipment to minimize exposure to airborne disease.
- 4. Promptly notifying the county health officer regarding member exposures (Penal Code § 7510).
- 5. Establishing procedures to ensure that members request exposure notification from health facilities when transporting a person that may have a communicable disease and that the member is notified of any exposure as required by Health and Safety Code § 1797.188.
- 6. Informing members of the provisions of Health and Safety Code § 1797.188 (exposure to communicable diseases and notification).
- (f) Provisions for acting as the designated officer liaison with health care facilities regarding communicable disease or condition exposure notification. The designated officer should coordinate with other [department/office] members to fulfill the role when not available. The designated officer shall ensure that the name, title and telephone number of the designated officer is posted on the [Department/Office] website (Health and Safety Code § 1797.188).

The ECO should also act as the liaison with the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/ OSHA) and may request voluntary compliance inspections. The ECO shall annually review and update the exposure control plan and review implementation of the plan (8 CCR 5193).

### **1016.3 EXPOSURE PREVENTION AND MITIGATION**

#### **1016.3.1 GENERAL PRECAUTIONS**

All members are expected to use good judgment and follow training and procedures related to mitigating the risks associated with communicable disease. This includes, but is not limited to (8 CCR 5193):

- (a) Stocking disposable gloves, antiseptic hand cleanser, CPR masks or other specialized equipment in the work area or [department/office] vehicles, as applicable.
- (b) Wearing [department/office]-approved disposable gloves when contact with blood, other potentially infectious materials, mucous membranes and non-intact skin can be reasonably anticipated.
- (c) Washing hands immediately or as soon as feasible after removal of gloves or other PPE.
- (d) Treating all human blood and bodily fluids/tissue as if it is known to be infectious for a communicable disease.
- (e) Using an appropriate barrier device when providing CPR.
- (f) Using a face mask or shield if it is reasonable to anticipate an exposure to an airborne transmissible disease.

## *Communicable Diseases*

---

- (g) Decontaminating non-disposable equipment (e.g., flashlight, control devices, clothing and portable radio) as soon as possible if the equipment is a potential source of exposure.
  - 1. Clothing that has been contaminated by blood or other potentially infectious materials shall be removed immediately or as soon as feasible and stored/decontaminated appropriately.
- (h) Handling all sharps and items that cut or puncture (e.g., needles, broken glass, razors, knives) cautiously and using puncture-resistant containers for their storage and/or transportation.
- (i) Avoiding eating, drinking, smoking, applying cosmetics or lip balm, or handling contact lenses where there is a reasonable likelihood of exposure.
- (j) Disposing of biohazardous waste appropriately or labeling biohazardous material properly when it is stored.

### 1016.3.2 IMMUNIZATIONS

Members who could be exposed to HBV due to their positions may receive the HBV vaccine and any routine booster at no cost (8 CCR 5193).

## 1016.4 POST EXPOSURE

### 1016.4.1 INITIAL POST-EXPOSURE STEPS

Members who experience an exposure or suspected exposure shall:

- (a) Begin decontamination procedures immediately (e.g., wash hands and any other skin with soap and water, flush mucous membranes with water).
- (b) Obtain medical attention as appropriate.
- (c) Notify a supervisor as soon as practicable.

### 1016.4.2 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The supervisor on-duty shall investigate every exposure or suspected exposure that occurs as soon as possible following the incident. The supervisor shall ensure the following information is documented (8 CCR 5193):

- (a) Name and Social Security number of the member exposed
- (b) Date and time of the incident
- (c) Location of the incident
- (d) Potentially infectious materials involved and the source of exposure (e.g., identification of the person who may have been the source)
- (e) Work being done during exposure
- (f) How the incident occurred or was caused
- (g) PPE in use at the time of the incident
- (h) Actions taken post-event (e.g., clean-up, notifications)

## *Communicable Diseases*

---

The supervisor shall advise the member that disclosing the identity and/or infectious status of a source to the public or to anyone who is not involved in the follow-up process is prohibited. The supervisor should complete the incident documentation in conjunction with other reporting requirements that may apply (see the Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury Reporting Policy).

### 1016.4.3 MEDICAL CONSULTATION, EVALUATION AND TREATMENT

[Department/Office] members shall have the opportunity to have a confidential medical evaluation immediately after an exposure and follow-up evaluations as necessary (8 CCR 5193).

The ECO should request a written opinion/evaluation from the treating medical professional that contains only the following information:

- (a) Whether the member has been informed of the results of the evaluation.
- (b) Whether the member has been notified of any medical conditions resulting from exposure to blood or other potentially infectious materials which require further evaluation or treatment.

No other information should be requested or accepted by the ECO.

### 1016.4.4 COUNSELING

The [Department/Office] shall provide the member, and his/her family if necessary, the opportunity for counseling and consultation regarding the exposure (8 CCR 5193).

### 1016.4.5 SOURCE TESTING

Testing a person for communicable diseases when that person was the source of an exposure should be done when it is desired by the exposed member or when it is otherwise appropriate (8 CCR 5193). Source testing is the responsibility of the ECO. If the ECO is unavailable to seek timely testing of the source, it is the responsibility of the exposed member's supervisor to ensure testing is sought.

Source testing may be achieved by:

- (a) Obtaining consent from the individual.
- (b) Complying with the statutory scheme of Health and Safety Code § 121060. This includes seeking consent from the person who was the source of the exposure and seeking a court order if consent is not given.
- (c) Testing the exposed member for evidence of a communicable disease and seeking consent from the source individual to either access existing blood samples for testing or for the source to submit to testing (Health and Safety Code § 120262).
- (d) Taking reasonable steps to immediately contact the County Health Officer and provide preliminary information regarding the circumstances of the exposure and the status of the involved individuals to determine whether the County Health Officer will order testing (Penal Code § 7510).

## *Communicable Diseases*

---

- (e) Under certain circumstances, a court may issue a search warrant for the purpose of HIV testing a person when the exposed member qualifies as a crime victim (Penal Code § 1524.1).

Since there is the potential for overlap between the different manners in which source testing may occur, the ECO is responsible for coordinating the testing to prevent unnecessary or duplicate testing.

The ECO should seek the consent of the individual for testing and consult the County Counsel to discuss other options when no statute exists for compelling the source of an exposure to undergo testing if he/she refuses.

### **1016.5 CONFIDENTIALITY OF REPORTS**

Medical information shall remain in confidential files and shall not be disclosed to anyone without the member's written consent (except as required by law). Test results from persons who may have been the source of an exposure are to be kept confidential as well.

### **1016.6 TRAINING**

All members shall participate in training regarding communicable diseases commensurate with the requirements of their position. The training (8 CCR 5193):

- (a) Shall be provided at the time of initial assignment to tasks where an occupational exposure may take place and at least annually after the initial training.
- (b) Shall be provided whenever the member is assigned new tasks or procedures affecting his/her potential exposure to communicable disease.
- (c) Should provide guidance on what constitutes an exposure, what steps can be taken to avoid an exposure and what steps should be taken if a suspected exposure occurs.

### **1016.7 POLICY**

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing a safe work environment for its members. Members should be aware that they are ultimately responsible for their own health and safety.

# Smoking and Tobacco Use

## 1018.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes limitations on smoking and the use of tobacco products by members and others while on-duty or while in Merced County Sheriff's Office facilities or vehicles.

For the purposes of this policy, smoking and tobacco use includes, but is not limited to, any tobacco product, such as cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco, snuff, tobacco pouches and chewing tobacco, as well as any device intended to simulate smoking, such as an electronic cigarette or personal vaporizer.

## 1018.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office recognizes that tobacco use is a health risk and can be offensive to others.

Smoking and tobacco use also presents an unprofessional image for the Department and its members. Therefore smoking and tobacco use is prohibited by members and visitors in all department facilities, buildings and vehicles, and as is further outlined in this policy (Government Code § 7597; Labor Code § 6404.5).

## 1018.3 SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE

Smoking and tobacco use by members is prohibited anytime members are in public view representing the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

It shall be the responsibility of each member to ensure that no person under his/her supervision smokes or uses any tobacco product inside County facilities and vehicles.

## 1018.4 ADDITIONAL PROHIBITIONS

No person shall use tobacco products within 20 feet of a main entrance, exit or operable window of any public building (including any department facility), or buildings on the campuses of the University of California, California State University and California community colleges, whether present for training, enforcement or any other purpose (Government Code § 7596 et seq.).

### 1018.4.1 NOTICE

The Sheriff or the authorized designee should ensure that proper signage is posted at each entrance to the Department facility (Labor Code § 6404.5).

# Personnel Complaints

## 1020.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy provides guidelines for the reporting, investigation and disposition of complaints regarding the conduct of members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office. This policy shall not apply to any questioning, counseling, instruction, informal verbal admonishment or other routine or unplanned contact of a member in the normal course of duty, by a supervisor or any other member, nor shall this policy apply to a criminal investigation.

## 1020.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office takes seriously all complaints regarding the service provided by the Department and the conduct of its members.

The Department will accept and address all complaints of misconduct in accordance with this policy and applicable federal, state and local law, municipal and county rules and the requirements of any collective bargaining agreements.

It is also the policy of this department to ensure that the community can report misconduct without concern for reprisal or retaliation.

## 1020.3 PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS

Personnel complaints include any allegation of misconduct or improper job performance that, if true, would constitute a violation of department policy or of federal, state or local law, policy or rule. Personnel complaints may be generated internally or by the public.

Inquiries about conduct or performance that, if true, would not violate department policy or federal, state or local law, policy or rule may be handled informally by a supervisor and shall not be considered a personnel complaint. Such inquiries generally include clarification regarding policy, procedures or the response to specific incidents by the Department.

### 1020.3.1 COMPLAINT CLASSIFICATIONS

Personnel complaints shall be classified in one of the following categories:

**Informal** - A matter in which the Area Lieutenant is satisfied that appropriate action has been taken by a supervisor of rank greater than the accused member.

**Formal** - A matter in which a supervisor determines that further action is warranted. Such complaints may be investigated by a supervisor of rank greater than the accused member or referred to the Area Lieutenant, depending on the seriousness and complexity of the investigation.

**Incomplete** - A matter in which the complaining party either refuses to cooperate or becomes unavailable after diligent follow-up investigation. At the discretion of the assigned supervisor or the Area Lieutenant, such matters may be further investigated depending on the seriousness of the complaint and the availability of sufficient information.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Complaints*

---

#### 1020.3.2 SOURCES OF COMPLAINTS

The following applies to the source of complaints:

- (a) Individuals from the public may make complaints in any form, including in writing, by email, in person or by telephone.
- (b) Any department member becoming aware of alleged misconduct shall immediately notify a supervisor.
- (c) Supervisors shall initiate a complaint based upon observed misconduct or receipt from any source alleging misconduct that, if true, could result in disciplinary action.
- (d) Anonymous and third-party complaints should be accepted and investigated to the extent that sufficient information is provided.
- (e) Tort claims and lawsuits may generate a personnel complaint.

#### 1020.4 AVAILABILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF COMPLAINTS

##### 1020.4.1 COMPLAINT FORMS

Personnel complaint forms will be maintained in a clearly visible location in the public area of the sheriff's facility and be accessible through the department website. Forms may also be available at other County facilities.

Personnel complaint forms in languages other than English may also be provided, as determined necessary or practicable.

##### 1020.4.2 ACCEPTANCE

All complaints will be courteously accepted by any [department/office] member and promptly given to the appropriate supervisor. Although written complaints are preferred, a complaint may also be filed orally, either in person or by telephone. Such complaints will be directed to a supervisor. If a supervisor is not immediately available to take an oral complaint, the receiving member shall obtain contact information sufficient for the supervisor to contact the complainant. The supervisor, upon contact with the complainant, shall complete and submit a complaint form as appropriate.

Although not required, complainants should be encouraged to file complaints in person so that proper identification, signatures, photographs or physical evidence may be obtained as necessary.

A complainant shall be provided with a copy of his/her statement at the time it is filed with the [Department/Office] (Penal Code § 832.7).

##### 1020.4.3 AVAILABILITY OF WRITTEN PROCEDURES

The [Department/Office] shall make available to the public a written description of the investigation procedures for complaints (Penal Code § 832.5).

#### 1020.5 DOCUMENTATION

Supervisors shall ensure that all formal and informal complaints are documented on a complaint form. The supervisor shall ensure that the nature of the complaint is defined as clearly as possible.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Complaints*

---

All complaints and inquiries should also be documented in a log that records and tracks complaints. The log shall include the nature of the complaint and the actions taken to address the complaint. On an annual basis, the Department should audit the log and send an audit report to the Sheriff or the authorized designee.

#### **1020.6 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS**

Allegations of misconduct will be administratively investigated as follows.

##### **1020.6.1 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

In general, the primary responsibility for the investigation of a personnel complaint shall rest with the member's immediate supervisor, unless the supervisor is the complainant, or the supervisor is the ultimate decision-maker regarding disciplinary action or has any personal involvement regarding the alleged misconduct. The Sheriff or the authorized designee may direct that another supervisor investigate any complaint.

A supervisor who becomes aware of alleged misconduct shall take reasonable steps to prevent aggravation of the situation.

The responsibilities of supervisors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring that upon receiving or initiating any formal complaint, a complaint form is completed.
  - 1. The original complaint form will be directed to the Area Lieutenant of the accused member, via the chain of command, who will take appropriate action and/or determine who will have responsibility for the investigation.
  - 2. In circumstances where the integrity of the investigation could be jeopardized by reducing the complaint to writing or where the confidentiality of a complainant is at issue, a supervisor shall orally report the matter to the member's Area Lieutenant or the Sheriff, who will initiate appropriate action.
- (b) Responding to all complaints in a courteous and professional manner.
- (c) Resolving those personnel complaints that can be resolved immediately.
  - 1. Follow-up contact with the complainant should be made within 24 hours of the Department receiving the complaint.
  - 2. If the matter is resolved and no further action is required, the supervisor will note the resolution on a complaint form and forward the form to the Area Lieutenant.
- (d) Ensuring that upon receipt of a complaint involving allegations of a potentially serious nature, the Area Lieutenant and Sheriff are notified via the chain of command as soon as practicable.
- (e) Promptly contacting the Department of Human Resources and the Area Lieutenant for direction regarding their roles in addressing a complaint that relates to sexual, racial, ethnic or other forms of prohibited harassment or discrimination.
- (f) Forwarding unresolved personnel complaints to the Area Lieutenant, who will determine whether to contact the complainant or assign the complaint for investigation.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## Personnel Complaints

---

- (g) Informing the complainant of the investigator's name and the complaint number within three days after assignment.
- (h) Investigating a complaint as follows:
  - 1. Making reasonable efforts to obtain names, addresses and telephone numbers of witnesses.
  - 2. When appropriate, ensuring immediate medical attention is provided and photographs of alleged injuries and accessible uninjured areas are taken.
- (i) Ensuring that the procedural rights of the accused member are followed (Government Code § 3303 et seq.).
- (j) Ensuring interviews of the complainant are generally conducted during reasonable hours.

### 1020.6.2 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES

Whether conducted by a supervisor or a member of the Internal Affairs Investigator, the following applies to members covered by the Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act (POBR) (Government Code § 3303):

- (a) Interviews of an accused member shall be conducted during reasonable hours and preferably when the member is on-duty. If the member is off-duty, he/she shall be compensated.
- (b) Unless waived by the member, interviews of an accused member shall be at the Merced County Sheriff's Office or other reasonable and appropriate place.
- (c) No more than two interviewers should ask questions of an accused member.
- (d) Prior to any interview, a member shall be informed of the nature of the investigation, the name, rank and command of the deputy in charge of the investigation, the interviewing officers and all other persons to be present during the interview.
- (e) All interviews shall be for a reasonable period and the member's personal needs should be accommodated.
- (f) No member should be subjected to offensive or threatening language, nor shall any promises, rewards or other inducements be used to obtain answers.
- (g) Any member refusing to answer questions directly related to the investigation may be ordered to answer questions administratively and may be subject to discipline for failing to do so.
  - 1. A member should be given an order to answer questions in an administrative investigation that might incriminate the member in a criminal matter only after the member has been given a *Lybarger* advisement. Administrative investigators should consider the impact that compelling a statement from the member may have on any related criminal investigation and should take reasonable steps to avoid creating any foreseeable conflicts between the two related investigations. This may include conferring with the person in charge of the criminal investigation (e.g., discussion of processes, timing, implications).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Personnel Complaints

---

2. No information or evidence administratively coerced from a member may be provided to anyone involved in conducting the criminal investigation or to any prosecutor.
- (h) The interviewer should record all interviews of members and witnesses. The member may also record the interview. If the member has been previously interviewed, a copy of that recorded interview shall be provided to the member prior to any subsequent interview.
- (i) All members subjected to interviews that could result in discipline have the right to have an uninvolved representative present during the interview. However, in order to maintain the integrity of each individual's statement, involved members shall not consult or meet with a representative or attorney collectively or in groups prior to being interviewed.
- (j) All members shall provide complete and truthful responses to questions posed during interviews.
- (k) No member may be requested or compelled to submit to a polygraph examination, nor shall any refusal to submit to such examination be mentioned in any investigation (Government Code § 3307).

No investigation shall be undertaken against any deputy solely because the deputy has been placed on a prosecutor's *Brady* list or the name of the deputy may otherwise be subject to disclosure pursuant to *Brady v. Maryland*. However, an investigation may be based on the underlying acts or omissions for which the deputy has been placed on a Brady list or may otherwise be subject to disclosure pursuant to *Brady v. Maryland* (Government Code § 3305.5).

#### 1020.6.3 ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION FORMAT

Formal investigations of personnel complaints shall be thorough, complete and essentially follow this format:

**Introduction** - Include the identity of the members, the identity of the assigned investigators, the initial date and source of the complaint.

**Synopsis** - Provide a brief summary of the facts giving rise to the investigation.

**Summary** - List the allegations separately, including applicable policy sections, with a brief summary of the evidence relevant to each allegation. A separate recommended finding should be provided for each allegation.

**Evidence** - Each allegation should be set forth with the details of the evidence applicable to each allegation provided, including comprehensive summaries of member and witness statements. Other evidence related to each allegation should also be detailed in this section.

**Conclusion** - A recommendation regarding further action or disposition should be provided.

**Exhibits** - A separate list of exhibits (e.g., recordings, photos, documents) should be attached to the report.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Complaints*

---

#### 1020.6.4 DISPOSITIONS

Each personnel complaint shall be classified with one of the following dispositions:

**Unfounded** - When the investigation discloses that the alleged acts did not occur or did not involve department members. Complaints that are determined to be frivolous will fall within the classification of unfounded.

**Exonerated** - When the investigation discloses that the alleged act occurred but that the act was justified, lawful and/or proper.

**Not sustained** - When the investigation discloses that there is insufficient evidence to sustain the complaint or fully exonerate the member.

**Sustained** - When the investigation discloses sufficient evidence to establish that the act occurred and that it constituted misconduct.

If an investigation discloses misconduct or improper job performance that was not alleged in the original complaint, the investigator shall take appropriate action with regard to any additional allegations.

#### 1020.6.5 COMPLETION OF INVESTIGATIONS

Every investigator or supervisor assigned to investigate a personnel complaint or other alleged misconduct shall proceed with due diligence in an effort to complete the investigation within one year from the date of discovery by an individual authorized to initiate an investigation (Government Code § 3304).

In the event that an investigation cannot be completed within one year of discovery, the assigned investigator or supervisor shall ensure that an extension or delay is warranted within the exceptions set forth in Government Code § 3304(d) or Government Code § 3508.1.

#### 1020.6.6 NOTICE TO COMPLAINANT OF INVESTIGATION STATUS

The member conducting the investigation should provide the complainant with periodic updates on the status of the investigation, as appropriate.

#### 1020.7 ADMINISTRATIVE SEARCHES

Assigned lockers, storage spaces and other areas, including desks, offices and vehicles, may be searched as part of an administrative investigation upon a reasonable suspicion of misconduct.

Such areas may also be searched any time by a supervisor for non-investigative purposes, such as obtaining a needed report, radio or other document or equipment.

Lockers and storage spaces may only be administratively searched in the member's presence, with the member's consent, with a valid search warrant or where the member has been given reasonable notice that the search will take place (Government Code § 3309).

##### 1020.7.1 DISCLOSURE OF FINANCIAL INFORMATION

An employee may be compelled to disclose personal financial information under the following circumstances (Government Code § 3308):

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Complaints*

---

- (a) Pursuant to a state law or proper legal process
- (b) Information exists that tends to indicate a conflict of interest with official duties
- (c) If the employee is assigned to or being considered for a special assignment with a potential for bribes or other improper inducements

#### **1020.8 ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE**

When a complaint of misconduct is of a serious nature, or when circumstances indicate that allowing the accused to continue to work would adversely affect the mission of the Department, the Sheriff, Undersheriff, or the authorized designee may temporarily assign an accused employee to administrative leave. The Sheriff or designee will work with Merced County Human Resources and the County Executive Office to complete the administrative leave documents. Any employee placed on administrative leave:

- (a) May be required to relinquish any department badge, identification, assigned weapons and any other department equipment.
- (b) Shall be required to continue to comply with all policies and lawful orders of a supervisor.
- (c) May be temporarily reassigned to a different shift, generally a normal business-hours shift, during the investigation. The employee may be required to remain available for contact at all times during such shift, and will report as ordered.

#### **1020.9 CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION**

Where a member is accused of potential criminal conduct, a separate supervisor or investigator shall be assigned to investigate the criminal allegations apart from any administrative investigation. Any separate administrative investigation may parallel a criminal investigation.

The Sheriff shall be notified as soon as practicable when a member is accused of criminal conduct. The Sheriff may request a criminal investigation by an outside law enforcement agency.

A member accused of criminal conduct shall be advised of his/her constitutional rights (Government Code § 3303(h)). The member should not be administratively ordered to provide any information in the criminal investigation.

The Merced County Sheriff's Office may release information concerning the arrest or detention of any member, including a deputy, that has not led to a conviction. No disciplinary action should be taken until an independent administrative investigation is conducted.

#### **1020.10 POST-ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION PROCEDURES**

Upon completion of a formal investigation, an investigation report should be forwarded to the Sheriff through the chain of command. Each level of command should review and include his/her comments in writing before forwarding the report. The Sheriff may accept or modify any classification or recommendation for disciplinary action.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Complaints*

---

#### 1020.10.1 DIVISION COMMANDER RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receipt of any completed personnel investigation, the Captain of the involved member shall review the entire investigative file, the member's personnel file and any other relevant materials.

The Captain may make recommendations regarding the disposition of any allegations and the amount of discipline, if any, to be imposed.

Prior to forwarding recommendations to the Sheriff, the Captain may return the entire investigation to the assigned investigator or supervisor for further investigation or action.

When forwarding any written recommendation to the Sheriff, the Captain shall include all relevant materials supporting the recommendation. Actual copies of a member's existing personnel file need not be provided and may be incorporated by reference.

#### 1020.10.2 SHERIFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Upon receipt of any written recommendation for disciplinary action, the Sheriff shall review the recommendation and all accompanying materials. The Sheriff may modify any recommendation and/or may return the file to the Captain for further investigation or action.

Once the Sheriff is satisfied that no further investigation or action is required by staff, the Sheriff shall determine the amount of discipline, if any, that should be imposed. In the event disciplinary action is proposed, the Sheriff shall provide the member with a pre-disciplinary procedural due process hearing (Skelly) by providing written notice of the charges, proposed action and reasons for the proposed action. Written notice shall be provided within one year from the date of discovery of the misconduct (Government Code § 3304(d)). The Sheriff shall also provide the member with:

- (a) Access to all of the materials considered by the Sheriff in recommending the proposed discipline.
- (b) An opportunity to respond orally or in writing to the Sheriff within five days of receiving the notice.
  - 1. Upon a showing of good cause by the member, the Sheriff may grant a reasonable extension of time for the member to respond.
  - 2. If the member elects to respond orally, the presentation may be recorded by the [Department/Office]. Upon request, the member shall be provided with a copy of the recording.

Once the member has completed his/her response or if the member has elected to waive any such response, the Sheriff shall consider all information received in regard to the recommended discipline. The Sheriff shall render a timely written decision to the member and specify the grounds and reasons for discipline and the effective date of the discipline. Once the Sheriff has issued a written decision, the discipline shall become effective.

#### 1020.10.3 NOTICE OF FINAL DISPOSITION TO THE COMPLAINANT

The Undersheriff shall ensure that the complainant is notified of the disposition (i.e., sustained, not sustained, exonerated, unfounded) of the complaint (Penal Code § 832.7(e)).

## *Personnel Complaints*

---

### 1020.10.4 NOTICE REQUIREMENTS

The disposition of any civilian's complaint shall be released to the complaining party within 30 days of the final disposition. This release shall not include what discipline, if any, was imposed (Penal Code § 832.7(e)).

### 1020.11 PRE-DISCIPLINE EMPLOYEE RESPONSE

The pre-discipline process is intended to provide the accused employee with an opportunity to present a written or oral response to the Sheriff after having had an opportunity to review the supporting materials and prior to imposition of any recommended discipline. The employee shall consider the following:

- (a) The response is not intended to be an adversarial or formal hearing.
- (b) Although the employee may be represented by an uninvolved representative or legal counsel, the response is not designed to accommodate the presentation of testimony or witnesses.
- (c) The employee may suggest that further investigation could be conducted or the employee may offer any additional information or mitigating factors for the Sheriff to consider.
- (d) In the event that the Sheriff elects to cause further investigation to be conducted, the employee shall be provided with the results prior to the imposition of any discipline.
- (e) The employee may thereafter have the opportunity to further respond orally or in writing to the Sheriff on the limited issues of information raised in any subsequent materials.

### 1020.12 RESIGNATIONS/RETIREMENTS PRIOR TO DISCIPLINE

In the event that a member tenders a written resignation or notice of retirement prior to the imposition of discipline, it shall be noted in the file. The tender of a resignation or retirement by itself shall not serve as grounds for the termination of any pending investigation or discipline.

### 1020.13 POST-DISCIPLINE APPEAL RIGHTS

Non-probationary employees have the right to appeal a suspension without pay, punitive transfer, demotion, reduction in pay or step, or termination from employment. The employee has the right to appeal using the procedures established by any collective bargaining agreement, Memorandum of Understanding and/or personnel rules.

In the event of punitive action against an employee covered by the POBR, the appeal process shall be in compliance with Government Code § 3304 and Government Code § 3304.5.

During any administrative appeal, evidence that a deputy has been placed on a *Brady* list or is otherwise subject to *Brady* restrictions may not be introduced unless the underlying allegations of misconduct have been independently established. Thereafter, such *Brady* evidence shall be limited to determining the appropriateness of the penalty (Government Code § 3305.5).

## *Personnel Complaints*

---

### **1020.14 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES AND OTHER MEMBERS**

At-will and probationary employees and those members other than non-probationary employees may be released from employment for non-disciplinary reasons (e.g., failure to meet standards) without adherence to the procedures set forth in this policy or any right to appeal. However, any probationary deputy subjected to an investigation into allegations of misconduct shall be entitled to those procedural rights, as applicable, set forth in the Peace Officer Bill of Rights (Government Code § 3303; Government Code § 3304). At-will, probationary employees and those other than non-probationary employees subjected to discipline or termination as a result of allegations of misconduct shall not be deemed to have acquired a property interest in their position, but shall be given the opportunity to appear before the Sheriff or authorized designee for a non-evidentiary hearing for the sole purpose of attempting to clear their name or liberty interest. There shall be no further opportunity for appeal beyond the liberty interest hearing and the decision of the Sheriff shall be final.

### **1020.15 RETENTION OF PERSONNEL INVESTIGATION FILES**

All personnel complaints shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule and as described in the Personnel Records Policy.

## Seat Belts

### 1022.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes guidelines for the use of seat belts and child restraints. This policy will apply to all members operating or riding in department vehicles (Vehicle Code § 27315.5).

#### 1022.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Child restraint system** - An infant or child passenger restraint system that meets Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS) and Regulations set forth in 49 CFR 571.213.

### 1022.2 WEARING OF SAFETY RESTRAINTS

All members shall wear properly adjusted safety restraints when operating or riding in a seat equipped with restraints, in any vehicle owned, leased or rented by this department while on- or off-duty, or in any privately owned vehicle while on-duty. The member driving such a vehicle shall ensure that all other occupants, including non-members, are also properly restrained.

Exceptions to the requirement to wear safety restraints may be made only in exceptional situations where, due to unusual circumstances, wearing a seat belt would endanger the member or the public. Members must be prepared to justify any deviation from this requirement.

### 1022.3 TRANSPORTING SUSPECTS, PRISONERS OR ARRESTEES

Suspects, prisoners and arrestees should be in a seated position and secured in the rear seat of any department vehicle with a prisoner restraint system or, when a prisoner restraint system is not available, by seat belts provided by the vehicle manufacturer. The prisoner restraint system is not intended to be a substitute for handcuffs or other appendage restraints.

Prisoners in leg restraints shall be transported in accordance with the Handcuffing and Restraints Policy.

### 1022.4 INOPERABLE SEAT BELTS

Department vehicles shall not be operated when the seat belt in the driver's position is inoperable. Persons shall not be transported in a seat in which the seat belt is inoperable.

Department vehicle seat belts shall not be modified, removed, deactivated or altered in any way, except by the vehicle maintenance and repair staff, who shall do so only with the express authorization of the Sheriff.

Members who discover an inoperable restraint system shall report the defect to the appropriate supervisor. Prompt action will be taken to replace or repair the system.

### 1022.5 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office that members use safety and child restraint systems to reduce the possibility of death or injury in a motor vehicle collision.

## *Seat Belts*

---

### **1022.6 TRANSPORTING CHILDREN**

Children under the age of 8 shall be transported in compliance with California's child restraint system requirements (Vehicle Code § 27360; Vehicle Code § 27363).

Rear seat passengers in a cage-equipped vehicle may have reduced clearance, which requires careful seating and positioning of seat belts. Due to this reduced clearance, and if permitted by law, children and any child restraint system may be secured in the front seat of such vehicles provided this positioning meets federal safety standards and the vehicle and child restraint system manufacturer's design and use recommendations. In the event that a child is transported in the front seat of a vehicle, the seat should be pushed back as far as possible and the passenger-side airbag should be deactivated. If this is not possible, members should arrange alternate transportation when feasible. A child shall not be transported in a rear-facing child restraint system in the front seat in a vehicle that is equipped with an active frontal passenger airbag (Vehicle Code § 27363).

### **1022.7 VEHICLES MANUFACTURED WITHOUT SEAT BELTS**

Vehicles manufactured and certified for use without seat belts or other restraint systems are subject to the manufacturer's operator requirements for safe use.

### **1022.8 VEHICLE AIRBAGS**

In all vehicles equipped with airbag restraint systems, the system will not be tampered with or deactivated, except when transporting children as written elsewhere in this policy. All equipment installed in vehicles equipped with airbags will be installed as per the vehicle manufacturer specifications to avoid the danger of interfering with the effective deployment of the airbag device.

## Body Armor

### 1024.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide law enforcement officers with guidelines for the proper use of body armor.

### 1024.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to maximize officer safety through the use of body armor in combination with prescribed safety procedures. While body armor provides a significant level of protection, it is not a substitute for the observance of officer safety procedures.

### 1024.3 ISSUANCE OF BODY ARMOR

The Administrative Sergeant shall ensure that body armor is issued to all deputies when the deputy begins service at the Merced County Sheriff's Office and that, when issued, the body armor meets or exceeds the standards of the National Institute of Justice.

The department standard-issued body armor consists of a vest which carries both front and rear soft armor panels. In addition, a trauma plate may be issued which is carried in the front portion of the vest (covering the front panel) for increased protection. The Administrative Sergeant shall establish a body armor replacement schedule and ensure that replacement body armor is issued pursuant to the schedule or whenever the body armor becomes worn or damaged to the point that its effectiveness or functionality has been compromised.

#### 1024.3.1 USE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Generally, the use of body armor is required subject to the following:

- (a) Deputies shall wear only department-approved body armor.
- (b) Deputies shall wear body armor anytime they are in a situation where they could reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
- (c) Deputies may be excused from wearing body armor when they are functioning primarily in an administrative or support capacity and could not reasonably be expected to take enforcement action.
- (d) Body armor, as described in Policy Section 1024.3 above, shall be worn when a deputy is working in uniform or taking part in Department range training. Deputies must wear both front and rear armor panels, including the ballistic panel, if issued, at all times.
- (e) A deputy may be excused from wearing body armor when he/she is involved in undercover or plainclothes work that his/her supervisor determines could be compromised by wearing body armor, or when a supervisor determines that other circumstances make it inappropriate to mandate wearing body armor.

## *Body Armor*

---

### 1024.3.2 INSPECTIONS OF BODY ARMOR

Supervisors should ensure that body armor is worn and maintained in accordance with this policy through routine observation and periodic documented inspections. Annual inspections of body armor should be conducted by an authorized designee for fit, cleanliness, and signs of damage, abuse and wear.

### 1024.3.3 CARE AND MAINTENANCE OF SOFT BODY ARMOR

Soft body armor should never be stored for any period of time in an area where environmental conditions (e.g., temperature, light, humidity) are not reasonably controlled (e.g., normal ambient room temperature/humidity conditions), such as in automobiles or automobile trunks.

Soft body armor should be cared for and cleaned pursuant to the manufacturer's care instructions provided with the soft body armor. The instructions can be found on labels located on the external surface of each ballistic panel. The carrier should also have a label that contains care instructions. Failure to follow these instructions may damage the ballistic performance capabilities of the armor. If care instructions for the soft body armor cannot be located, contact the manufacturer to request care instructions.

Soft body armor should not be exposed to any cleaning agents or methods not specifically recommended by the manufacturer, as noted on the armor panel label.

Soft body armor should be replaced in accordance with the manufacturer's recommended replacement schedule.

## **1024.4 RANGEMASTER RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Rangemaster should:

- (a) Monitor technological advances in the body armor industry for any appropriate changes to Department approved body armor.
- (b) Assess weapons and ammunition currently in use and the suitability of approved body armor to protect against those threats.
- (c) Provide training that educates deputies about the safety benefits of wearing body armor.

## Personnel Records

### 1026.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy governs maintenance and access to personnel records. Personnel records include any file maintained under an individual member's name.

### 1026.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this [department/office] to maintain personnel records and preserve the confidentiality of personnel records pursuant to the Constitution and the laws of California (Penal Code § 832.7).

### 1026.3 [DEPARTMENT/OFFICE] FILE

The [department/office] file shall be maintained as a record of a person's employment/appointment with this [department/office]. The [department/office] file should contain, at a minimum:

- (a) Personal data, including photographs, marital status, names of family members, educational and employment history or similar information. A photograph of the member should be permanently retained.
- (b) Election of employee benefits.
- (c) Personnel action reports reflecting assignments, promotions and other changes in employment/appointment status. These should be permanently retained.
- (d) Original performance evaluations. These should be permanently maintained.
- (e) Discipline records, including copies of sustained personnel complaints.
  - 1. Disciplinary action resulting from sustained internally initiated complaints or observation of misconduct shall be maintained pursuant to the established records retention schedule and at least two years (Government Code § 26202; Government Code § 34090).
  - 2. Disciplinary action resulting from a sustained civilian's complaint shall be maintained pursuant to the established records retention schedule and at least five years (Penal Code § 832.5). Adverse comments such as supervisor notes or memos may be retained in the department file after the member has had the opportunity to read and initial the comment (Government Code § 3305).
- (f) Adverse comments such as supervisor notes or memos may be retained in the [department/office] file after the member has had the opportunity to read and initial the comment (Government Code § 3305).
  - 1. Once a member has had an opportunity to read and initial any adverse comment, the member shall be given the opportunity to respond in writing to the adverse comment within 30 days (Government Code § 3306).
  - 2. Any member response shall be attached to and retained with the original adverse comment (Government Code § 3306).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Records*

---

3. If a member refuses to initial or sign an adverse comment, at least one supervisor should note the date and time of such refusal on the original comment and the member should sign or initial the noted refusal. Such a refusal, however, shall not be deemed insubordination, nor shall it prohibit the entry of the adverse comment into the member's file (Government Code § 3305).
- (g) Commendations and awards.
- (h) Any other information, the disclosure of which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

#### **1026.4 DIVISION FILE**

Division files may be separately maintained internally by a member's supervisor for the purpose of completing timely performance evaluations. The Division file may contain supervisor comments, notes, notices to correct and other materials that are intended to serve as a foundation for the completion of timely performance evaluations.

All materials intended for this interim file shall be provided to the employee prior to being placed in the file in accordance with Government Code § 3305 and Government Code § 3306.

#### **1026.5 TRAINING FILE**

An individual training file shall be maintained by the Administrative Sergeant for each member. Training files will contain records of all training; original or photocopies of available certificates, transcripts, diplomas and other documentation; and education and firearms qualifications. Training records may also be created and stored remotely, either manually or automatically (e.g., Daily Training Bulletin (DTB) records).

- (a) The involved member is responsible for providing the Administrative Sergeant or immediate supervisor with evidence of completed training/education in a timely manner.
- (b) The Administrative Sergeant or supervisor shall ensure that copies of such training records are placed in the member's training file.
- (c) For the purposes of this policy section The Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST), Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is a sufficient "Training File"

#### **1026.6 INTERNAL AFFAIRS FILE**

Internal affairs files shall be maintained under the exclusive control of the Undersheriff in conjunction with the office of the Sheriff. Access to these files may only be approved by the Sheriff or the Undersheriff.

These files shall contain the complete investigation of all formal complaints of member misconduct, regardless of disposition. Investigations of complaints that result in the following findings shall not be placed in the member's file but will be maintained in the internal affairs file:

- (a) Not sustained

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Records*

---

- (b) Unfounded
- (c) Exonerated

Investigation files arising out of civilian's complaints shall be maintained pursuant to the established records retention schedule and for a period of at least five years. Investigations that resulted in other than a sustained finding may not be used by the [Department/Office] to adversely affect an employee's career (Penal Code § 832.5).

Investigation files arising out of internally generated complaints shall be maintained pursuant to the established records retention schedule and for at least two years (Government Code § 26202; Government Code § 34090).

#### **1026.7 MEDICAL FILE**

A medical file shall be maintained separately from all other personnel records and shall contain all documents relating to the member's medical condition and history, including but not limited to:

- (a) Materials relating to a medical leave of absence, including leave under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- (b) Documents relating to workers' compensation claims or the receipt of short- or long-term disability benefits.
- (c) Fitness-for-duty examinations, psychological and physical examinations, follow-up inquiries and related documents.
- (d) Medical release forms, doctor's slips and attendance records that reveal a member's medical condition.
- (e) Any other documents or materials that reveal the member's medical history or medical condition, including past, present or future anticipated mental, psychological or physical limitations.

#### **1026.8 SECURITY**

Personnel records should be maintained in a secured location and locked either in a cabinet or access-controlled room. Personnel records maintained in an electronic format should have adequate password protection.

Personnel records are subject to disclosure only as provided in this policy, the Records Maintenance and Release Policy or according to applicable discovery procedures.

Nothing in this policy is intended to preclude review of personnel records by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), County Counsel or other attorneys or representatives of the County in connection with official business.

##### **1026.8.1 REQUESTS FOR DISCLOSURE**

Any member receiving a request for a personnel record shall promptly notify the Custodian of Records or other person charged with the maintenance of such records.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Records*

---

Upon receipt of any such request, the responsible person shall notify the affected member as soon as practicable that such a request has been made (Evidence Code § 1043).

The responsible person shall further ensure that an appropriate response to the request is made in a timely manner, consistent with applicable law. In many cases, this may require assistance of available legal counsel.

All requests for disclosure that result in access to a member's personnel records shall be logged in the corresponding file.

#### **1026.8.2 RELEASE OF PERSONNEL INFORMATION**

Personnel records are confidential and shall not be disclosed except as allowed by law. Nothing in this section is intended to preclude review of personnel files by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), County Counsel or other attorneys or representatives of the County in connection with official business (Government Code § 832.7; Evidence Code § 1043) (See also Records Maintenance and Release Policy).

Any person who maliciously, and with the intent to obstruct justice or the due administration of the laws, publishes, disseminates, or otherwise discloses the residence address or telephone number of any member of this [department/office] may be guilty of a misdemeanor (Penal Code § 146e).

The [Department/Office] may release any factual information concerning a disciplinary investigation if the member who is the subject of the investigation (or the member's representative) publicly makes a statement that is published in the media and that the member (or representative) knows to be false. The disclosure of such information, if any, shall be limited to facts that refute any such false statement (Penal Code § 832.7).

#### **1026.9 BRADY MATERIAL IN PERSONNEL FILES**

The purpose of this section is to establish a procedure for releasing potentially exculpatory information (so-called Brady material) contained within confidential peace officer personnel files.

##### **1026.9.1 DEFINITIONS**

**Brady Material** - In the Brady v. Maryland decision ( 373 U.S. 83 (1963)) the United States Supreme Court held that the prosecution has an affirmative duty to disclose to the defendant evidence which is both favorable and material to the guilt and/or punishment of the defendant.

**The Prosecution** - Refers to the District Attorney and all investigative agencies involved in the criminal prosecution of a defendant, including this department.

**Penal Code § 1054.1** - California law also establishes a criminal defendant's right to access potentially exculpatory evidence.

##### **1026.9.2 RELEASE OF PERSONNEL FILES TO DISTRICT ATTORNEY**

Pursuant to Penal Code § 832.7(a), the only time the District Attorney (Attorney General or Grand Jury) is entitled to access confidential peace officer personnel files without filing a so-called Pitchess motion (Evidence Code § 1043 et seq.) is when they are investigating the conduct of a

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Personnel Records*

---

deputy or this department. Such access shall not be considered a waiver of the confidentiality of the information contained in these files.

Absent a specific investigation of identified deputy(s) or a specific investigation of this department (or the consent of an involved deputy), no confidential information from any deputy's personnel file shall be released to the District Attorney or Grand Jury without full compliance with the Pitchess process. The prosecution of a criminal defendant is not considered an investigation of any involved deputy.

Should a deputy's credibility or other issues related to a deputy's personnel file arise in the context of a deputy acting as a witness for the prosecution, access to that deputy's personnel file by either the District Attorney or the criminal defendant shall be limited to that which is authorized by the process set forth in Evidence Code § 1043, et seq.

### 1026.9.3 PROCEDURE

If a deputy is a material witness in a criminal case, a person or persons designated by the Sheriff may examine the subject deputy's personnel file to determine whether there are Brady materials contained therein (e.g., evidence which is both favorable and material to the guilt and/or punishment of the defendant). If Brady material is located, the following procedure shall apply:

- (a) In the event that a Pitchess motion has not already been filed by the criminal defendant or other party, the District Attorney shall be notified of the potential presence of Brady material in the deputy's personnel file
- (b) The District Attorney should be instructed to file a Pitchess motion in order to initiate an in camera review by the court
- (c) As with any Pitchess motion, and prior to any review of the files by the court, subject deputy(s) shall be notified in writing that a Pitchess motion has been filed
- (d) The responsible Custodian of Records shall accompany all relevant personnel files during any in camera inspection and address any issues or questions raised by the court in determining whether or not any material contained in the file is both material and favorable to the criminal defendant
- (e) If the court determines that there is relevant Brady material contained in the file(s), only that material ordered released will be copied and released to the parties filing the Pitchess motion
  1. Prior to the release of any materials pursuant to this process, the Custodian of Records should request a protective order from the Court limiting the use of such materials to the involved case and requiring the return of all copies upon completion of the case.

### 1026.10 MEMBER ACCESS TO HIS/HER OWN PERSONNEL RECORDS

Any member may request access to his/her own personnel records during the normal business hours of those responsible for maintaining such files. Any member seeking the removal of any

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Personnel Records*

---

item from his/her personnel records shall file a written request to the Sheriff through the chain of command. The [Department/Office] shall remove any such item if appropriate, or within 30 days provide the member with a written explanation of why the contested item will not be removed. If the contested item is not removed from the file, the member's request and the written response from the [Department/Office] shall be retained with the contested item in the member's corresponding personnel record (Government Code § 3306.5).

Members may be restricted from accessing files containing any of the following information:

- (a) An ongoing internal affairs investigation to the extent that it could jeopardize or compromise the investigation pending final disposition or notice to the member of the intent to discipline.
- (b) Confidential portions of internal affairs files that have not been sustained against the member.
- (c) Criminal investigations involving the member.
- (d) Letters of reference concerning employment/appointment, licensing or issuance of permits regarding the member.
- (e) Any portion of a test document, except the cumulative total test score for either a section of the test document or for the entire test document.
- (f) Materials used by the [Department/Office] for staff management planning, including judgments or recommendations concerning future salary increases and other wage treatments, management bonus plans, promotions and job assignments or other comments or ratings used for department planning purposes.
- (g) Information of a personal nature about a person other than the member if disclosure of the information would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of the other person's privacy.
- (h) Records relevant to any other pending claim between the [Department/Office] and the member that may be discovered in a judicial proceeding.

#### **1026.11 RETENTION AND PURGING**

Unless provided otherwise in this policy, personnel records shall be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

- (a) During the preparation of each member's performance evaluation, all personnel complaints and disciplinary actions should be reviewed to determine the relevancy, if any, to progressive discipline, training and career development. Each supervisor responsible for completing the member's performance evaluation should determine whether any prior sustained disciplinary file should be retained beyond the required period for reasons other than pending litigation or other ongoing legal proceedings.
- (b) If a supervisor determines that records of prior discipline should be retained beyond the required period, approval for such retention should be obtained through the chain of command from the Sheriff.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Personnel Records*

---

- (c) If, in the opinion of the Sheriff, a personnel complaint or disciplinary action maintained beyond the required retention period is no longer relevant, all records of such matter may be destroyed in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

---

# Request for Change of Assignment

## **1028.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

It is the intent of the Department that all requests for change of assignment are considered equally. To facilitate the selection process, the following procedure is established whereby all such requests will be reviewed on an equal basis as assignments are made.

## **1028.2 REQUEST FOR CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT**

Personnel wishing a change of assignment are to submit a Request for Change of Assignment letter. The letter should then be forwarded through the chain of command to his/her division captain.

### **1028.2.1 PURPOSE OF LETTER**

The letter is designed to aid employees in listing their qualifications for specific assignments. All relevant experience, education and training should be included when completing this form.

All assignments an employee is interested in should be listed in the letter.

The Request for Change of Assignment letter will remain in effect until the end of the calendar year in which it was submitted. Effective January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year, employees still interested in new positions will need to complete and submit a new Change of Assignment Request letter.

## **1028.3 SUPERVISOR'S COMMENTARY**

The employee's immediate supervisor shall make appropriate comments and recommendations regarding the Request for Change of Assignment letter before forwarding it to the division captain of the employee involved or, in the case of a civilian employee, to the Administrative Manager.

# Employee Commendations

## 1030.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Special recognition may be in order whenever an employee performs his/her duties in an exemplary manner. This procedure provides general guidelines for the commending of exceptional employee performance.

## 1030.2 WHO MAY MAKE COMMENDATIONS

A written commendation may be made by any supervisor regarding any other employee of the Department, provided the reporting person is superior in rank or is the person-in-charge of the individual being commended. Additionally, investigating deputies may commend uniformed deputies for exceptional assistance in investigative functions, with approval from the investigator's supervisor. Any employee may recommend a commendation to the supervisor of the employee subject to commendation.

## 1030.3 COMMENDABLE ACTIONS

A meritorious or commendable act by an employee of this department may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Superior handling of a difficult situation by an employee
- Conspicuous bravery or outstanding performance by any employee of the Department
- Any action or performance that is above and beyond the typical duties of an employee

### 1030.3.1 COMMENDATION INCIDENT REPORT

The Commendation Incident Report shall be used to document the commendation of the employee and shall contain the following:

- (a) Employee name, division, and assignment at the date and time of the commendation
- (b) A brief account of the commendable action shall be documented on the form with report numbers, as appropriate
- (c) Signature of the commending supervisor

Completed reports shall be forwarded to the appropriate division captain for his/her approval. The division captain shall sign and forward the report to the Undersheriff for his/her review. The report will then be returned to the Administrative Secretary for entry into the employee's personnel file.

## 1030.4 MAJOR COMMENDATIONS

A major commendation and award may be given for the outstanding performance of duty or for an action involving commendatory bravery. Such commendations shall include the conferring of a Department medal and citation, along with documentation placed in the member's personnel file.

When a supervisor is made aware of performance by a subordinate that appears deserving of a major commendation, the supervisor shall prepare a written recommendation describing the

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Employee Commendations*

---

incident and forward it along with any related documentation through his/ her division captain to the Chairperson of the Commendation Board for consideration.

There will be two Commendation Boards. One board to represent Operations and the other to represent Corrections.

Each Commendation Board shall be convened as needed by the Chairperson to review recommendation for commendations.

Operations Commendation Board shall consist of the following personnel, who will serve at the pleasure of the Board Chairperson:

- (a) Operations Division Captain will serve as the Board Chairperson
- (b) Operations Division sergeant selected by the Sheriff, or his designee
- (c) Operations Division sergeant selected by the MCDSA
- (d) Deputy Sheriff selected by the Sheriff, or his designee
- (e) Deputy Sheriff selected by the MCDSA

Corrections Commendation Board shall consist of the following personnel, who will serve at the pleasure of the Board Chairperson:

- (a) Corrections Division Captain will serve as the Board Chairperson
- (b) Corrections Division lieutenant selected by the Sheriff, or his designee
- (c) Corrections Division sergeant selected by the Sheriff, or his designee
- (d) Corrections Division sergeant selected by the MCSEA
- (e) Corrections Officer selected by the Sheriff, or his designee
- (f) Corrections Officer selected by the MCSEA

The board shall be responsible for evaluating the recommendation and for making their own recommendation to the Sheriff, or designee, as to the appropriate type and degree of commendation to be given. Their recommendation shall be forwarded to the Sheriff, or designee for final approval.

When the Sheriff, or designee, decides on a written commendation, it shall be issued from his office. When a major commendation is to be given, arrangements for the presentation shall be handled by the Sheriff's Administration and the Public Information Officer.

### **1030.5 MERCED COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT MAJOR COMMENDATIONS**

#### **Medal of Valor**

The Medal of Valor is the highest commendation awarded by the Department. It may be awarded to a member who displays extreme courage while consciously facing mortal danger during an on-duty or off-duty action in an effort to provide protection or preservation of life.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Employee Commendations*

---

### Medal of Merit with Valor

The Medal of Merit with Valor may be awarded to members who distinguish themselves by bravery or heroism during an on-duty or off-duty action, which is above and beyond the normal demands of duty. It is differentiated from the Medal of Valor in that the element of mortal danger is not present.

### Medal of Merit for Meritorious Service

The Medal of Merit for Meritorious Service is awarded to members for exceptional performance in other than an enforcement action. Unlike the Outstanding Achievement Award, the Medal of Merit for Meritorious Service is reserved for projects of a larger scope, such as the conception or development of a new unit, program, or process which has greatly benefited the County, Department and/or the law enforcement profession.

### Outstanding Achievement Award

The Outstanding Achievement Award is given to a member for exceptional performance or career achievement in an assignment which is clearly above that which is normally expected and which has contributed materially to the success of the unit, project or operation.

### Lifesaving Medal with Valor

The Lifesaving Medal with Valor is awarded to members who meet the Lifesaving criteria and distinguish themselves by an act of bravery or heroism above and beyond the normal demands of duty.

### Lifesaving Medal

The Lifesaving Medal is awarded to a member whose immediate life sustaining actions result in the saving of human life. The action must be personally performed by the member and must be confirmed by medical personnel (when applicable), or by the member's supervisor, as a life sustaining or life extending action without which an apparent loss of life could have resulted.

### Officer of the Year Medal

- (a) Deputy Sheriff of the Year
- (b) Correctional Officer of the Year
- (c) Dispatcher of the Year

## Fitness for Duty

### 1032.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

All deputies are required to be free from any physical, emotional, or mental condition which might adversely affect the exercise of peace officer powers. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all deputies of this department remain fit for duty and able to perform their job functions (Government Code § 1031).

### 1032.2 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) It shall be the responsibility of each member of this department to maintain good physical condition sufficient to safely and properly perform essential duties of their position.
- (b) Each member of this department shall perform his/her respective duties without physical, emotional, and/or mental constraints.
- (c) During working hours, all employees are required to be alert, attentive, and capable of performing his/her assigned responsibilities.
- (d) Any employee who feels unable to perform his/her duties shall promptly notify a supervisor. In the event that an employee believes that another employee is unable to perform his/her duties, such observations and/or belief shall be promptly reported to a supervisor.

### 1032.3 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) A supervisor observing an employee, or receiving a report of an employee who is perceived to be, unable to safely perform his/her duties due to a physical or mental condition shall take prompt and appropriate action in an effort to resolve the situation.
- (b) Whenever feasible, the supervisor should attempt to ascertain the reason or source of the problem and in all cases a preliminary evaluation should be made in an effort to determine the level of inability of the employee to perform his/her duties.
- (c) In the event the employee appears to be in need of immediate medical or psychiatric treatment, all reasonable efforts should be made to provide such care.
- (d) In conjunction with the Area Lieutenant and concurrence of the Division Captain, a determination should be made whether or not the employee should be temporarily relieved from his/her duties.
- (e) The Sheriff shall be promptly notified in the event that any employee is relieved from duty.

## *Fitness for Duty*

---

### **1032.4 NON-WORK RELATED CONDITIONS**

Any employee suffering from a non-work related condition which warrants a temporary relief from duty may be required to use sick leave or other paid time off (PTO) in order to obtain medical treatment or other reasonable rest period.

### **1032.5 WORK RELATED CONDITIONS**

Any employee suffering from a work related condition which warrants a temporary relief from duty shall be required to comply with personnel rules and guidelines for processing such claims.

Upon the recommendation of the Area Lieutenant and concurrence of the Division Captain, any employee whose actions or use of force in an official capacity result in death or serious injury to another may be temporarily removed from regularly assigned duties and/or placed on paid administrative leave for the wellbeing of the employee and until such time as the following may be completed:

- (a) A preliminary determination that the employee's conduct appears to be in compliance with policy and, if appropriate.
- (b) The employee has had the opportunity to receive necessary counseling and/or psychological clearance to return to full duty.

### **1032.6 PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS**

- (a) Whenever circumstances reasonably indicate that an employee is unfit for duty, the Sheriff may serve that employee with a written order to undergo a physical and/or psychological examination in cooperation with Department of Human Resources to determine the level of the employee's fitness for duty. The order shall indicate the date, time and place for the examination.
- (b) The examining physician or therapist will provide the Department with a report indicating that the employee is either fit for duty or, if not, listing any functional limitations which limit the employee's ability to perform job duties. If the employee places his/her condition at issue in any subsequent or related administrative action/grievance, the examining physician or therapist may be required to disclose any and all information which is relevant to such proceeding (Civil Code § 56.10(c)(8)).
- (c) In order to facilitate the examination of any employee, the Department will provide all appropriate documents and available information to assist in the evaluation and/or treatment.
- (d) All reports and evaluations submitted by the treating physician or therapist shall be part of the employee's confidential personnel file.
- (e) Any employee ordered to receive a fitness for duty examination shall comply with the terms of the order and cooperate fully with the examining physician or therapist regarding any clinical interview, tests administered or other procedures as directed.

## *Fitness for Duty*

---

Any failure to comply with such an order and any failure to cooperate with the examining physician or therapist may be deemed insubordination and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

- (f) Once an employee has been deemed fit for duty by the examining physician or therapist, the employee will be notified to resume his/her duties.

### **1032.7 LIMITATION ON HOURS WORKED**

Absent emergency operations members should not work more than:

- 16 hours in one day (24 hour) period or
- 30 hours in any 2 day (48 hour) period or
- 84 hours in any 7 day (168 hour) period

Except in very limited circumstances members should have a minimum of 8 hours off between shifts. Supervisors should give consideration to reasonable rest periods and are authorized to deny overtime or relieve to off-duty status any member who has exceeded the above guidelines.

Limitations on the number of hours worked apply to shift changes, shift trades, rotation, holdover, training, general overtime and any other work assignments.

### **1032.8 APPEALS**

An employee who is separated from paid employment or receives a reduction in salary resulting from a fitness for duty examination shall be entitled to an administrative appeal as outlined in the Personnel Complaints Policy.

## Meal Periods and Breaks

### 1034.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy regarding meals and breaks, insofar as possible shall conform to the policy governing all County employees that has been established by the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

#### 1034.1.1 MEAL PERIODS

Sworn employees and dispatchers shall remain on duty subject to call during meal breaks. All other employees are not on call during meal breaks unless directed otherwise by a supervisor.

Uniformed patrol and traffic deputies shall advise dispatch of their location during their meal break. Uniformed deputies shall take their breaks within the County limits unless on assignment outside of the County.

The time spent for the meal period shall not exceed the authorized time allowed.

#### 1034.1.2 15 MINUTE BREAKS

Each employee is entitled to a 15 minute break, near the mid point, for each four-hour work period. Only one 15 minute break shall be taken during each four hours of duty. No breaks shall be taken during the first or last hour of an employee's shift unless approved by a supervisor.

Employees normally assigned to the sheriff's facility shall remain in the sheriff's facility for their breaks. This would not prohibit them from taking a break outside the facility if on official business.

Field deputies will take their breaks in their assigned areas, subject to call and shall monitor their radios. When field deputies take their breaks away from their vehicles, they shall do so only with the knowledge and clearance of Dispatch.

## Lactation Break Policy

### 1035.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide reasonable accommodations to employees desiring to express breast milk for the employee's infant child (29 USC § 207 and Labor Code §§ 1030-1032).

### 1035.2 POLICY

It is the policy of this department to provide, in compliance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, reasonable break time and appropriate facilities to accommodate any employee desiring to express breast milk for her nursing infant child (29 USC § 207 and Labor Code § 1030).

### 1035.3 LACTATION BREAK TIME

A rest period should be permitted each time the employee has the need to express breast milk (29 USC § 207). In general, lactation breaks that cumulatively total 30 minutes or less during any four-hour work period or major portion of a four-hour work period would be considered reasonable. However, individual circumstances may require more or less time. Such breaks, if feasible, should be taken at the same time as the employee's regularly scheduled rest or meal periods.

While a reasonable effort will be made to provide additional time beyond authorized breaks, any such time exceeding regularly scheduled and paid break time will be unpaid (Labor Code § 1030).

Employees desiring to take a lactation break shall notify Dispatch or a supervisor prior to taking such a break. Such breaks may be reasonably delayed if they would seriously disrupt department operations (Labor Code § 1032).

Once a lactation break has been approved, the break should not be interrupted except for emergency or exigent circumstances.

### 1035.4 PRIVATE LOCATION

The Department will make reasonable efforts to accommodate employees with the use of an appropriate room or other location to express milk in private. Such room or place should be in close proximity to the employee's work area and shall be other than a bathroom or toilet stall. The location must be shielded from view and free from intrusion from co-workers and the public (29 USC § 207 and Labor Code § 1031).

Employees occupying such private areas shall either secure the door or otherwise make it clear to others that the area is occupied with a need for privacy. All other employees should avoid interrupting an employee during an authorized break, except to announce an emergency or other urgent circumstance.

Authorized lactation breaks for employees assigned to the field may be taken at the nearest appropriate private area.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Lactation Break Policy*

---

### **1035.5 STORAGE OF EXPRESSED MILK**

Any employee storing expressed milk in any authorized refrigerated area within the Department shall clearly label it as such and shall remove it when the employee ends her shift.

## Time Card Procedures

### 1036.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Time cards are submitted to the payroll clerk every Monday morning by 0800 hours for the payment of wages.

In the event that a holiday falls on the Monday, time cards will be due on the prior or following business day or by other direction from the Administrative Manager.

#### 1036.1.1 RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMPLETION OF TIME CARDS

Employees are responsible for the accurate and timely submission of time cards for the payment of wages.

#### 1036.1.2 TIME REQUIREMENTS

All employees are paid on a bi-weekly basis usually on Friday with certain exceptions such as holidays. Time cards shall be completed and submitted to Administration no later than 9:00 a.m. on the Monday morning before the end of the pay period, unless specified otherwise.

#### 1036.1.3 TIME CARD SIGNATURES

The employee's signature and appropriate approval signature will be required on all time cards prior to submission.

## Overtime Compensation Requests

### 1038.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

It is the policy of the Department to compensate non-exempt salaried employees who work authorized overtime either by payment of wages as agreed and in effect through the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), or by the allowance of accrual of compensatory time off. In order to qualify for either, the employee must complete and submit a Request for Overtime Payment as soon as practical after overtime is worked.

#### 1038.1.1 DEPARTMENT POLICY

Because of the nature of law enforcement work, and the specific needs of the Department, a degree of flexibility concerning overtime policies must be maintained.

Non-exempt employees are not authorized to volunteer work time to the Department. All requests to work overtime shall be approved in advance by a supervisor. If circumstances do not permit prior approval, then approval shall be sought as soon as practical during the overtime shift and in no case later than the end of shift in which the overtime is worked.

Short periods of work at the end of the normal duty day (e.g., less than one hour in duration) may be handled unofficially between the supervisor and the employee by flexing a subsequent shift schedule to compensate for the time worked rather than by submitting requests for overtime payments. If the supervisor authorizes or directs the employee to complete a form for such a period, the employee shall comply.

The individual employee may request compensatory time in lieu of receiving overtime payment, however, the employee may not exceed 480 hours of compensatory time.

### 1038.2 REQUEST FOR OVERTIME COMPENSATION

Employees shall submit all overtime compensation requests to their immediate supervisors as soon as practicable for verification and forwarding to the Administration Division.

Failure to submit a request for overtime compensation in a timely manner may result in discipline.

#### 1038.2.1 EMPLOYEES RESPONSIBILITY

Employees shall complete the requests immediately after working the overtime and turn them in to their immediate supervisor or other appropriate supervisor. Employees submitting overtime cards for on-call pay when off duty shall submit the cards to the respective supervisor or other appropriate supervisor the first day after returning for work.

#### 1038.2.2 SUPERVISORS RESPONSIBILITY

The supervisor who verifies the overtime earned shall verify that the overtime was worked before approving the request.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Overtime Compensation Requests*

---

### **1038.3 ACCOUNTING FOR OVERTIME WORKED**

Employees are to record the actual time worked in an overtime status. In some cases, the Memorandum of Understanding provides that a minimum number of hours will be paid, (e.g., two hours for Court, four hours for outside overtime). The supervisor will enter the actual time worked.

#### **1038.3.1 ACCOUNTING FOR PORTIONS OF AN HOUR**

When accounting for less than a full hour, time worked shall be rounded up to the nearest quarter of an hour as indicated by the following chart:

<u>TIME WORKED</u>	<u>INDICATE ON CARD</u>
1 to 15 minutes	.25
16 to 30 minutes	.50
31 to 45 minutes	.75
46 to 60 minutes	1 hour

#### **1038.3.2 VARIATION IN TIME REPORTED**

Where two or more employees are assigned to the same activity, case, or court trial and the amount of time for which payment is requested varies from that reported by the other deputy, the approving supervisor may require each employee to include the reason for the variation.

## Outside Employment

### 1040.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In order to avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest for departmental employees engaging in outside employment, all employees shall obtain written approval from the Sheriff prior to engaging in any outside employment. Approval of outside employment shall be at the discretion of the Sheriff in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

#### 1040.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**Outside Employment** - Any member of this department who receives wages, compensation or other consideration of value from another employer, organization or individual not affiliated directly with this department for services, product(s) or benefits rendered. For purposes of this section, the definition of outside employment includes those employees who are self-employed and not affiliated directly with this department for services, product(s) or benefits rendered.

**Outside Overtime** - Any member of this department who performs duties or services on behalf of an outside organization, company, or individual within this jurisdiction. Such outside overtime shall be requested and scheduled directly through this department so that the Department may be reimbursed for the cost of wages and benefits.

### 1040.2 OBTAINING APPROVAL

No member of this department may engage in any outside employment without first obtaining prior written approval of the Sheriff. Failure to obtain prior written approval for outside employment or engaging in outside employment prohibited by this policy may lead to disciplinary action.

In order to obtain approval for outside employment, the employee must submit an outside employment request via E-mail to the employee's immediate supervisor. The request shall detail the nature of the employment and the employing entity. The request will then be forwarded through channels to the Sheriff for consideration. The Sheriff's decision whether or not to grant approval will be sent to the requesting employee via E-mail.

If approved, the employee will be provided with a copy of the approved permit. Unless otherwise indicated in writing on the approved permit, a permit will be valid through the end of the calendar year in which the permit is approved. Any employee seeking to renew a permit shall submit a new Outside Employment Application in a timely manner.

Any employee seeking approval of outside employment, whose request has been denied, shall be provided with a written reason for the denial of the application at the time of the denial (Penal Code § 70(e)(3)).

#### 1040.2.1 APPEAL OF DENIAL OF OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

If an employee's Outside Employment Application is denied or withdrawn by the Department, the employee may file a written notice of appeal to the Sheriff within ten days of the date of denial.

## *Outside Employment*

---

If the employee's appeal is denied, the employee may file a grievance pursuant to the procedure set forth in the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

### **1040.2.2 REVOCATION/SUSPENSION OF OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT PERMITS**

Any outside employment permit may be revoked or suspended under the following circumstances:

- (a) Should an employee's performance at this department decline to a point where it is evaluated by a supervisor as needing improvement to reach an overall level of competency, the Sheriff may, at his or her discretion, revoke any previously approved outside employment permit(s). That revocation will stand until the employee's performance has been reestablished at a satisfactory level and his/her supervisor recommends reinstatement of the outside employment permit
- (b) Suspension or revocation of a previously approved outside employment permit may be included as a term or condition of sustained discipline
- (c) If, at any time during the term of a valid outside employment permit, an employee's conduct or outside employment conflicts with the provisions of department policy, the permit may be suspended or revoked
- (d) When an employee is unable to perform at a full duty capacity due to an injury or other condition, any previously approved outside employment permit may be subject to similar restrictions as those applicable to the employee's full time duties until the employee has returned to a full duty status

### **1040.3 PROHIBITED OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT**

Consistent with the provisions of Government Code § 1126, the Department expressly reserves the right to deny any Outside Employment Application or Outside Employment submitted by an employee seeking to engage in any activity which:

- (a) Involves the employee's use of departmental time, facilities, equipment or supplies, the use of the Department badge, uniform, prestige or influence for private gain or advantage
- (b) Involves the employee's receipt or acceptance of any money or other consideration from anyone other than this department for the performance of an act which the employee, if not performing such act, would be required or expected to render in the regular course or hours of employment or as a part of the employee's duties as a member of this department
- (c) Involves the performance of an act in other than the employee's capacity as a member of this department that may later be subject directly or indirectly to the control, inspection, review, audit or enforcement of any other employee of this department
- (d) Involves time demands that would render performance of the employee's duties for this department less efficient

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Outside Employment*

---

- (e) Involves the employment of the employee by any other law enforcement agency in whatever capacity or function

#### 1040.3.1 OUTSIDE SECURITY AND PEACE OFFICER EMPLOYMENT

Consistent with the provisions of Penal Code § 70, and because it would further create a potential conflict of interest, no member of this department may engage in any outside or secondary employment as a private security guard, private investigator or other similar private security position.

Any private organization, entity or individual seeking special services for security or traffic control from members of this department must submit a written request to the Sheriff in advance of the desired service. Such outside extra duty overtime assignments will be assigned, monitored and paid through the Department.

- (a) The applicant will be required to enter into an indemnification agreement prior to approval.
- (b) The applicant will further be required to provide for the compensation and full benefits of all employees requested for such outside security services.
- (c) Should such a request be approved, any employee working outside overtime shall be subject to the following conditions:
  - 1. The deputy(s) shall wear the departmental uniform/identification.
  - 2. The deputy(s) shall be subject to the rules and regulations of this department.
  - 3. No deputy may engage in such outside employment during or at the site of a strike, lockout, picket, or other physical demonstration of a labor dispute.
  - 4. Compensation for such approved outside security services shall be pursuant to normal overtime procedures.
  - 5. Outside security services shall not be subject to the collective bargaining process.
  - 6. No deputy may engage in outside employment as a peace officer for any other public agency without prior written authorization of the Sheriff.

#### 1040.3.2 OUTSIDE OVERTIME ARREST AND REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any employee making an arrest or taking other official action while working in an approved outside overtime assignment shall be required to complete all related reports in a timely manner pursuant to department policy. Time spent on the completion of such reports shall be considered incidental to the outside overtime assignment.

#### 1040.3.3 SPECIAL RESTRICTIONS

Except for emergency situations or with prior authorization from the appropriate Operations Division supervisor, undercover deputies or deputies assigned to covert operations shall not be

## *Outside Employment*

---

eligible to work overtime or other assignments in a uniformed or other capacity which might reasonably disclose the deputy's law enforcement status.

### **1040.4 DEPARTMENT RESOURCES**

Employees are prohibited from using any department equipment or resources in the course of or for the benefit of any outside employment. This shall include the prohibition of access to official records or databases of this department or other agencies through the use of the employee's position with this department.

#### **1040.4.1 REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RECORDS**

Employees approved for outside employment expressly agree that their personal financial records may be requested and reviewed/audited for potential conflict of interest (Government Code § 3308; Government Code § 1126). Prior to providing written approval for an outside employment position, the Department may request that an employee provide his/her personal financial records for review/audit in order to determine whether a conflict of interest exists. Failure of the employee to provide the requested personal financial records could result in denial of the off-duty work permit. If, after approving a request for an outside employment position, the Department becomes concerned that a conflict of interest exists based on a financial reason, the Department may request that the employee provide his/her personal financial records for review/audit. If the employee elects not to provide the requested records, his/her off-duty work permit may be revoked pursuant to the Revocation/Suspension of Outside Employment Permits section of this policy.

### **1040.5 CHANGES IN OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

If an employee terminates his or her outside employment during the period of a valid permit, the employee shall promptly submit written notification of such termination to the Sheriff through channels. Any subsequent request for renewal or continued outside employment must thereafter be processed and approved through normal procedures set forth in this policy.

Employees shall also promptly submit in writing to the Sheriff any material changes in outside employment including any change in the number of hours, type of duties, or demands of any approved outside employment. Employees who are uncertain whether a change in outside employment is material are advised to report the change.

### **1040.6 OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT WHILE ON DISABILITY**

Department members engaged in outside employment who are placed on disability leave or modified/light-duty shall inform their immediate supervisor in writing within five days whether or not they intend to continue to engage in such outside employment while on such leave or light-duty status. The immediate supervisor shall review the duties of the outside employment along with any related doctor's orders, and make a recommendation to the Sheriff whether such outside employment should continue.

In the event the Sheriff determines that the outside employment should be discontinued or if the employee fails to promptly notify his/her supervisor of his/her intentions regarding their work

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Outside Employment*

---

permit, a notice of revocation of the member's permit will be forwarded to the involved employee, and a copy attached to the original work permit.

Criteria for revoking the outside employment permit include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (a) The outside employment is medically detrimental to the total recovery of the disabled member, as indicated by the County's professional medical advisors.
- (b) The outside employment performed requires the same or similar physical ability, as would be required of an on-duty member.
- (c) The employee's failure to make timely notice of their intentions to their supervisor.

When the disabled member returns to full duty with the Merced County Sheriff's Office, a request (in writing) may be made to the Sheriff to restore the permit.

---

## **OUTSIDE VOLUNTEERISM/MEMBERSHIP**

### **1041.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Volunteering for the benefit of the community is encouraged and supported by this Department. However, the nature of the volunteerism and/or an employee's membership in a particular association or organization may, in some instances, be an actual or perceived conflict of interest for the respective employee. Employees who reasonably anticipate a potential conflict of interest due to such volunteerism or membership shall obtain approval from the Sheriff prior to such participation.

#### **1041.1.1 PROHIBITED VOLUNTEERISM/MEMBERSHIP**

An employee shall not participate in any volunteerism or be a member of any group, association, or entity which:

1. Could reflect conduct which any employee knows or reasonably should know is unbecoming of a member of the Department or which is contrary to good order, efficiency or morale, or which tends to reflect unfavorably upon the Department or its members.
2. Involves law enforcement functions by the employee

# Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury Reporting

## 1042.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding the timely reporting of occupational diseases, psychiatric injuries and work-related injuries.

### 1042.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Occupational disease or work-related injury** - An injury, disease or psychiatric injury arising out of employment (Labor Code § 3208; Labor Code § 3208.3; Labor Code § 3212 et seq.).

## 1042.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will address occupational diseases and work-related injuries appropriately, and will comply with applicable state workers' compensation requirements (Labor Code § 3200 et seq.).

## 1042.3 RESPONSIBILITIES

### 1042.3.1 MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Any member sustaining any occupational disease or work-related injury shall report such event as soon as practicable, but within 24 hours, to a supervisor, and shall seek medical care when appropriate.

### 1042.3.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

A supervisor learning of any occupational disease or work-related injury should ensure the member receives medical care as appropriate.

Supervisors shall ensure that required documents regarding workers' compensation are completed and forwarded promptly. Any related Countywide disease- or injury-reporting protocol shall also be followed.

Supervisors shall determine whether the Major Incident Notification and Illness and Injury Prevention policies apply and take additional action as required.

### 1042.3.3 DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES

When the Director of Administrative Services receives a report of an occupational disease or work-related injury, a review of the report for accuracy will be completed. The Director of Administrative Services shall determine what additional action should be taken. The report shall then be forwarded to the Sheriff, the County's risk management entity, and the appropriate division Captain to ensure any required Division of Occupational Health and Safety Administration (Cal/OSHA) reporting is made as required in the illness and injury prevention plan identified in the Illness and Injury Prevention Policy.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury Reporting*

---

#### **1042.3.4 SHERIFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Sheriff shall review and forward copies of the report to the Department of Human Resources. Copies of the report and related documents retained by the Department shall be filed in the member's confidential medical file.

#### **1042.4 OTHER DISEASE OR INJURY**

Diseases and injuries caused or occurring on-duty that do not qualify for workers' compensation reporting shall be documented on the designated report of injury form, which shall be signed by a supervisor. A copy of the completed form shall be forwarded to the Director of Administrative Services and a copy sent to the appropriate division Captain.

Unless the injury is extremely minor, this report shall be signed by the affected member, indicating that he/she desired no medical attention at the time of the report. By signing, the member does not preclude his/her ability to later seek medical attention.

#### **1042.5 SETTLEMENT OFFERS**

When a member sustains an occupational disease or work-related injury that is caused by another person and is subsequently contacted by that person, his/her agent, insurance company or attorney and offered a settlement, the member shall take no action other than to submit a written report of this contact to his/her supervisor as soon as possible.

##### **1042.5.1 NO SETTLEMENT WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL**

No less than 10 days prior to accepting and finalizing the settlement of any third-party claim arising out of or related to an occupational disease or work-related injury, the member shall provide the Sheriff with written notice of the proposed terms of such settlement. In no case shall the member accept a settlement without first providing written notice to the Sheriff. The purpose of such notice is to permit the County to determine whether the offered settlement will affect any claim the County may have regarding payment for damage to equipment or reimbursement for wages against the person who caused the disease or injury, and to protect the County's right of subrogation, while ensuring that the member's right to receive compensation is not affected.

## Personal Appearance Standards

### 1044.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

In order to project uniformity and neutrality toward the public and other members of the department, employees shall maintain their personal hygiene and appearance to project a professional image appropriate for this department and for their assignment.

### 1044.2 GROOMING STANDARDS

Unless otherwise stated and because deviations from these standards could present officer safety issues, the following appearance standards shall apply to all employees, except those whose current assignment would deem them not appropriate, and where the Sheriff has granted exception.

#### 1044.2.1 HAIR

Hairstyles of all members shall be neat in appearance. For male sworn members, hair must not extend below the top edge of the uniform collar while assuming a normal stance.

For female sworn members, hair must be no longer than the horizontal level of the bottom of the uniform patch when the employee is standing erect, worn up or in a tightly wrapped braid or ponytail.

#### 1044.2.2 FACIAL HAIR

Sworn and non-sworn personnel are permitted to wear goatees and beards that are maintained at a length and pattern so as not to detract from the professional image employees of the Sheriff's Office shall maintain.

Permission to wear beards, goatees, and mustaches may be withdrawn by the Sheriff, at any time. Facial hair should be neat, trimmed and maintained at a length **not to exceed one-half inch**. Beards must be trimmed above and below and shall not be permitted below the Adam's apple or on the neck. Uniformed deputies shall not be permitted to wear facial hair with less than five days growth.

Sworn personnel working in undercover assignments, or specialized assignments requiring facial hair not otherwise authorized by this policy, shall be exempt from these restrictions at the discretion of the Sheriff or his designee.

Beards and goatees are **PROHIBITED** while wearing the Sheriff's Office Class A uniform. The Class A uniform is defined in section 1046 of this policy manual. Mustaches are allowed while in the Class A uniform so long as they are clean, neat, and trimmed. The mustache may not extend lower than the bottom corners of your mouth. Facial hair as it is defined above is allowed at any time while wearing the Class B, C, D, and E uniforms.

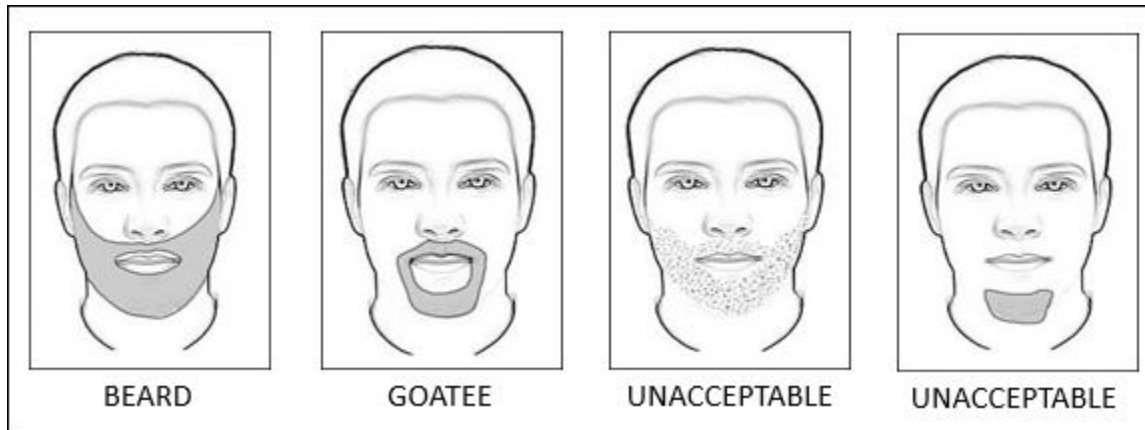
# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### Personal Appearance Standards

---

#### 1044.2.3 FACIAL HAIR EXAMPLES



The above examples should be used to reference what is and is **NOT** a beard or goatee per this policy manual. The above examples should also be referred to when determining what is and is NOT acceptable per this policy manual. The Sheriff or his designee will be the final authority with regard to what is deemed acceptable.

#### 1044.2.4 FINGERNAILS

Fingernails extending beyond the tip of the finger can pose a safety hazard to deputies or others. For this reason, fingernails shall be trimmed so that no point of the nail extends beyond the tip of the finger.

#### 1044.2.5 JEWELRY AND ACCESSORIES

No jewelry or personal ornaments shall be worn by deputies on any part of the uniform or equipment, except those authorized within this manual. Jewelry, if worn around the neck, shall not be visible above the shirt collar.

Earrings shall not be worn by uniformed sworn members, detectives or special assignment personnel without permission of the Sheriff or his/her designee. Only one ring may be worn on each hand of the employee while on-duty.

#### 1044.2.6 SIDEBURNS

Sideburns shall not extend below the bottom of the outer ear opening (the top of the earlobes) and shall be trimmed and neat.

### 1044.3 TATTOOS

Many factors influence the community's confidence in the Sheriff's Office and its employees. The image that we present to the community must be one of professionalism. Although it is authorized by this policy for tattoos to be visible while on duty and in uniform they should not be inappropriate. (Examples of inappropriate consist of, but are not limited to derogatory, offensive, sexual in nature, gang related, racially motivated, or any sign or symbol that would likely be found offensive to a particular group or class of citizen) Employees of the Sheriff's Office are urged to

## *Personal Appearance Standards*

---

use sound judgment and decision making when considering their personal appearance and the appropriateness of their body art. The Sheriff or his designee may require at any time a member of this agency to cover a visible tattoo because it has been deemed inappropriate.

### **1044.4 BODY PIERCING OR ALTERATION**

Body piercing or alteration to any area of the body visible in any authorized uniform or attire that is a deviation from normal anatomical features and which is not medically required is prohibited. Such body alteration includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) Tongue splitting or piercing.
- (b) The complete or trans dermal implantation of any material other than hair replacement.
- (c) Abnormal shaping of the ears, eyes, nose or teeth
- (d) Branding or scarification.

# Uniform Regulations

## 1046.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The uniform policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office is established to ensure that uniformed deputies will be readily identifiable to the public through the proper use and wearing of department uniforms. Employees should also refer to the following associated policies:

Department Owned and Personal Property

Body Armor

Personal Appearance Standards

The Uniform and Equipment Specifications manual is maintained and periodically updated by the Sheriff or his/her designee. That manual should be consulted regarding authorized equipment and uniform specifications.

The Merced County Sheriff's Office will provide uniforms for all employees required to wear them in the manner, quantity and frequency agreed upon in the respective employee group's collective bargaining agreement.

## 1046.2 WEARING AND CONDITION OF UNIFORM AND EQUIPMENT

Sheriff's employees wear the uniform to be identified as the law enforcement authority in society. The uniform also serves an equally important purpose to identify the wearer as a source of assistance in an emergency, crisis or other time of need.

- (a) Uniform and equipment shall be maintained in a serviceable condition and shall be ready at all times for immediate use. Uniforms shall be neat, clean, and appear professionally pressed.
- (b) All peace officers of this department shall possess and maintain at all times, a serviceable uniform and the necessary equipment to perform uniformed field duty.
- (c) Personnel shall wear only the uniform specified for their rank and assignment.
- (d) The uniform is to be worn in compliance with the specifications set forth in the department's uniform specifications that are maintained separately from this policy.
- (e) All supervisors will perform periodic inspections of their personnel to ensure conformance to these regulations.
- (f) Civilian attire shall not be worn in combination with any distinguishable part of the uniform.
- (g) Uniforms are only to be worn while on duty, while in transit to or from work, for court, or at other official department functions or events.
- (h) If the uniform is worn while in transit, an outer garment shall be worn over the uniform shirt so as not to bring attention to the employee while he/she is off duty.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

- (i) Employees are not to purchase or drink alcoholic beverages while wearing any part of the department uniform, including the uniform pants.
- (j) Mirrored sunglasses will not be worn with any Department uniform
- (k) Visible jewelry, other than those items listed below, shall not be worn with the uniform-unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff or his designee.
  - 1. Wrist watch
  - 2. Wedding ring(s), class ring, or other ring of tasteful design. A maximum of one ring/set may be worn on each hand
  - 3. Medical alert bracelet

### 1046.2.1 DEPARTMENT ISSUED IDENTIFICATION

The Department issues each employee an official department identification card bearing the employee's name, identifying information and photo likeness. All employees shall be in possession of their department issued identification card at all times while on duty or when carrying a concealed weapon.

- (a) Whenever on duty or acting in an official capacity representing the department, employees shall display their department issued identification in a courteous manner to any person upon request and as soon as practical.
- (b) Deputies working specialized assignments may be excused from the possession and display requirements when directed by the respective Division Captain.

### 1046.3 UNIFORM CLASSES

The following classes of uniforms are recognized by the Merced County Sheriff's Office. There shall be no deviation from these uniform guidelines without the expressed consent of the Sheriff or his designee.

#### 1046.3.1 CLASS A UNIFORM

The Class A uniform must be worn on special occasions such as funerals, graduations, ceremonies, or as directed. Any member not wearing the Class A uniform is prohibited from attending these functions. The Class A uniform is required for all full-time deputies and is optional for all other sworn members. The Class A uniform includes the standard uniform with:

- (a) Long sleeve shirt with tie
- (b) Class A Dress jacket
- (c) Polished shoes

Authorized "5.11" brand "PDU" uniforms:

Class A men's shirt: long sleeve #72344-160

Class A men's shirt: short sleeve #71183-160

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

Class A women's shirt: short sleeve #61158-160

Class A women's shirt: long sleeve #62067-160

Class A women's trouser: pants #64208-860

Class A men's trouser: pants #64304-890

Authorized "Flying Cross" brand uniforms:

Class A trouser #32218 trouser 55% DACRON / 45% WOOL (side pockets may be added per spec sheet)

Boots with pointed toes are not permitted.

During inspections, funerals and other designated details, deputy sheriff's shall wear their duty belt, duty holster with weapon and magazines while wearing their Class A coat. The wearing of the baton ring and single handcuff case is optional.

All other duty equipment (portable radio, double cuff case, Taser, OC spray, etc) is to be removed from the belt.

The Ted Blocker Model SW600 holster, swivel forward only, in black basket weave may be substituted at the employees expense for the department issued holster only for inspections, funerals and other designated details.

### 1046.3.2 CLASS B UNIFORM

All deputies will possess and maintain a serviceable Class B uniform at all times.

The Class B uniform will consist of the same garments and equipment as the Class A uniform with the following requirements:

- (a) The short sleeve shirt may be worn with the collar open. No tie is required
- (b) A white or black crew neck t-shirt must be worn with the short sleeve uniform shirt
- (c) The long sleeve uniform shirt must be worn with a tie or black turtle neck shirt
- (d) When a uniform coat or jacket (i.e. "Tuffy") is worn, a tie or black turtle neck shirt must be worn
- (e) All short sleeve shirt buttons must remain buttoned except for the last button at the neck
- (f) Approved all black shoes may be worn
- (g) Boots with pointed toes are not permitted
- (h) All uniform boots and shoes must be kept clean and polished
- (i) Brass snaps, name tags, insignias, clips or buckles shall be polished

Additional authorized "5.11" brand "PDU" uniforms:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

Class B men's shirt: long sleeve #72345-160

Class B men's shirt: short sleeve #71177-160

Class B women's shirt: short sleeve #61162-160

Class B women's shirt: long sleeve #62068-160

Authorized "Flying Cross" brand uniforms: Class B trouser: #32265 trouser 100% DACRON POLYESTER (side pockets may be added per spec sheet)

### 1046.3.3 CLASS C, D, & E UNIFORMS

The Sheriff may authorize special uniforms to be worn by deputies. The Class C "5.11" or "First Tactical" brand OD (Olive Drab) Green uniform may be worn on patrol (section 1 below).

1) Class C: "5.11" brand OD (Olive Drab) Green TDU (Tactical Dress Uniform) with regular department gold shoulder patches, embroidered badge and name tape. Specialty Unit name tapes (SWAT, K9, FTO, SERT, SRT, etc) may be worn over the employees name tape. The Specialty Unit name tapes are only to be as long as the specialty unit title (not the full length of the pocket name tape) and are to be centered over the employees name tape. The Class C uniform is authorized for patrol. Tan/desert color boots may be worn as a substitution for black boots.

2) Class D: "5.11" brand OD (Olive Drab) Green TDU (Tactical Dress Uniform) with subdued department patches, subdued embroidered badge and subdued name tape.

3) Class E: Tan, Black, or OD (Olive Drab) Green polo shirt with department embroidered badge and OD Green 5.11 TDU pants. This uniform is for non patrol assignments and to be worn when appropriate. Examples of when this uniform should be worn are specific office duties, training events, proctoring a test, etc.

For Personnel choosing to wear the "First Tactical" OD Green uniforms, the following specs are authorized by the Sheriff.

"First Tactical" Velocity Long Sleeve, OD Green, BDU Men's Shirt - 111008-830

"First Tactical" Velocity Long Sleeve, OD Green, BDU Women's Shirt - 121008-830

"First Tactical" Velocity Short Sleeve, OD Green, BDU Men's Shirt - 112009-830

"First Tactical" Velocity Short Sleeve, OD Green, BDU Women's Shirt - 122009-830

"First Tactical" Velocity Tactical Pants, OD Green Men's - 114011-830

"First Tactical" Velocity Tactical Pants, OD Green Women's - 124011-830

"First Tactical" Velocity BDU Pants, OD Green Men's - 114009-830

"First Tactical" Velocity BDU Pants, OD Green Women's - 114009-830

### 1046.3.4 FOUL WEATHER GEAR

The purpose of this policy is to have standardized jackets and jumpsuits. Variations of this policy will not be allowed.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

- (a) The Tuffy type black nylon or OD (Olive Drab) green GORE-TEX jacket and the approved black leather jacket may be worn during normal shift work. This jacket must be expressly manufactured for law enforcement. All jackets will have the departmental shoulder patches sewn on. All jackets will have the department badge and employee's name tag displayed or a department approved embroidered badge and name tag. No other embroidery is authorized. The word "SHERIFF" may be embroidered in gold color on the back of the jacket. Sergeants shall wear their rank on their jacket sleeves (except leather jackets); captains and lieutenants shall wear their rank insignia on their epaulets.
- (b) The black or OD green nylon or GORE-TEX windbreaker jacket is approved but must have the department patches sewn on. This jacket must be expressly manufactured for law enforcement. All jackets will have the department badge and employee's name tag displayed or a department approved embroidered badge and name tag. No other embroidery is authorized. The word "SHERIFF" may be embroidered in gold color on the back of the jacket.
- (c) The jacket shall be all black or OD green in color and must be expressly manufactured for law enforcement use. The jacket must have button down front pockets and have shoulder epaulets. The jacket may have side access hand warming pockets.
- (d) The olive drab green Ackerman jumpsuit is approved for use during normal shift work when foul weather conditions are anticipated or exist. Foul weather conditions shall be determined by the forecasted weather conditions for the period of time an employee is scheduled to work. However, weather conditions that are forecasted to improve throughout the shift may negate the wearing of this suit. The shift sergeant or the Area Lieutenant may suspend the wearing of the suit based on improved weather conditions. Foul weather conditions may be determined by the following, but are not limited to, conditions such as temperatures below 50 degrees F, rain, and high winds. The jumpsuit will have the departmental badge patch and the respective employee's name sewn/embroidered on the front and the departmental badge patches sewn on both upper sleeves. Sergeants shall wear their respective rank insignias on the jumpsuit sleeves. No other embroidery, patches, pins, or insignias are permitted on the jumpsuit without the express authorization of the Sheriff.

### 1046.3.5 HEAD GEAR

The purpose of this policy is to have standardized head gear. A black or OD green baseball style hat with the sheriff's star embroidered in gold color or badge patch sewn on the front is authorized to wear on patrol. Deputies may have their last name embroidered on the rear of the baseball hat.

2. A black or OD green knit beanie may also be worn with the Sheriff's Star embroidered in gold color or badge patch sewn on the front is authorized to wear on patrol.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Uniform Regulations*

---

3. Propper Brand Boonie Cap. Olive Drab green color with departmental badge patch affixed for both Operations and Corrections personnel.

#### **1046.4 INSIGNIA AND PATCHES**

- (a) This policy applies to all employees.
- (b) **Shoulder Patches** - The authorized shoulder patch supplied by the Department shall be machine stitched to the sleeves of all uniform shirts and jackets, three-quarters of an inch below the shoulder seam of the shirt and be bisected by the crease in the sleeve.
- (c) **Service stars** - Service stars for length of service shall be worn on long sleeved shirts and dress jackets. They are to be embroidered onto the long sleeve uniform shirt and dress jackets. The service stars for long sleeve uniform shirts shall be sewn one half inch above the cuff seam on the dress of the sleeve. The stars are to be worn on the left sleeve only. Class A Dress Jackets service stars will be embroidered above the upper most one half inch sleeve stripe that corresponds with rank. One service star will represent 5 years of full time law enforcement service.
- (d) The regulation nameplate, or an authorized sewn on cloth nameplate, shall be worn at all times while in uniform. The nameplate shall display the employee's last name. The nameplate shall be worn and placed directly above the right pocket located in the middle, bisected by the pressed shirt seam, with equal distance from both sides of the nameplate to the outer edge of the pocket. Any deviation from this policy with regard to the regulation nameplate must be approved by the Sheriff.
- (e) When a jacket is worn, the nameplate or an authorized sewn on cloth nameplate shall be affixed to the jacket in the same manner as the uniform.
- (f) **Assignment Insignias** - The type of insignia shall be approved by the Sheriff. Authorized assignments include SWAT, FTO (Field Training Officer, Jail Training Officer), K-9 handler, Aviation Unit, Attorney, SWAT MEDIC, Dive Team and Honor Guard. The insignias for these assignments are insignia pins. Only active specialty unit members in good standing may wear specific assignment insignias. No more than 2 (two) assignment insignias may be worn on the uniform at any time, regardless of how many specialized assignments appointed to the employee. The respective employee may elect to wear any 2 (two) assignment insignias on any uniform at any time. When only one insignia is worn, the insignia will be placed approximately 1/8" above the name plate on the uniform shirt and/or jacket. If 2 insignias are worn, the larger (typically the wider) shall be worn directly above the nameplate with the smaller insignia worn directly above the larger insignia separated by approximately 1/2".
- (g) **American Flag Pin** - A flag pin may be worn, centered above the nameplate.
- (h) **Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy service pin**

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

- (i) Badge - The department issued badge, or an authorized embroidered replica, must be worn and visible at all times while in uniform.
- (j) Rank Insignia - The designated insignia indicating the employee's rank must be worn at all times while in uniform. Sergeants shall wear both their sleeve insignia and collar insignia for both short sleeve and long sleeve uniform shirts. The Undersheriff, Captains, and Lieutenants shall wear their respective ranks on both collars of the uniform shirt. The Sheriff may authorize exceptions.

### **1046.4.1 MOURNING BADGE**

Uniformed employees shall wear a black mourning band across the uniform badge whenever a law enforcement officer is killed in the line of duty. The following mourning periods will be observed:

- (a) A deputy of this department - From the time of death until midnight on the 14th day after the death.
- (b) A deputy from this or an adjacent county - From the time of death until midnight on the day of the funeral.
- (c) Funeral attendee - While attending the funeral of an out of region fallen officer.
- (d) National Peace Officers Memorial Day (May 15th) - From 0001 hours until 2359 hours.
- (e) As directed by the Sheriff.
- (f) [Mourning bands will be worn across the badge where the bottom of the band begins at approximately the seven o'clock position and the top of the band is approximately at the two o'clock position \(See letter g below\).](#)

### **1046.5 CIVILIAN ATTIRE**

There are assignments within the Department that do not require the wearing of a uniform because recognition and authority are not essential to their function. There are also assignments in which the wearing of civilian attire is necessary.

- (a) All employees shall wear clothing that fits properly, is clean and free of stains, and not damaged or excessively worn.
- (b) All male administrative, investigative and support personnel who elect to wear civilian clothing to work shall wear button style shirts with a collar, slacks or suits that are moderate in style. Jeans may be worn however, they must be clean and free of any rips, tears, or fraying.
- (c) All female administrative, investigative, and support personnel who elect to wear civilian clothes to work shall wear dresses, slacks, shirts, blouses, or suits which are moderate in style. Jeans may be worn however, they must be clean and free of any rips, tears or fraying. Capri style pants may be worn which are moderate in style and carry a professional image. Open toed shoes/sandals which are heeled may be worn. Flip Flop/Sandals which are jeweled are authorized to be worn with civilian attire.
- (d) The following items shall not be worn on duty:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

1. T-shirt alone
  2. Open toed sandals or thongs
  3. Swimsuit, tube tops, or halter-tops
  4. Spandex type pants or see-through clothing
  5. Distasteful printed slogans, buttons or pins
- (e) Variations from this order are allowed at the discretion of the Sheriff or designee when the employee's assignment or current task is not conducive to the wearing of such clothing.
- (f) No item of civilian attire may be worn on duty that would adversely affect the reputation of the Merced County Sheriff's Office or the morale of the employees.

### 1046.5.1 CLASS A DRESS JACKET

- (a) All full time Deputy Sheriff's and Correctional Officers are required to have a department approved dress or Class A jacket.
- (b) The dress jacket shall be forest green in color, must be expressly manufactured for law enforcement use and must be CHP approved (fabric blend). The jacket must have a zipper front closure, button down front pockets with gold colored type buttons and have shoulder epaulets with gold colored type buttons.
- (c) The jacket must have departmental patches sewn on both shoulders.
- (d) Deputy Sheriff's and Correctional Officers shall have a 1/2 inch wide forest green stripe, from one seam to the other seam with the stripe on the outside portion of the jacket around each sleeve. The stripe will be three inches from the end of each sleeve and the stripe will be one half inch in width.
- (e) Sergeants shall have a 1/2 wide gold stripe, from one seam to the other seam with the stripe on the outside portion of the jacket around each sleeve. The stripe will be three inches from the end of each sleeve and the stripe will be one half inch in width. Sergeants shall have their chevrons sewn one quarter inch below the departmental patch.
- (f) Lieutenants shall have two 1/2 inch wide gold stripes, from one seam to the other seam with the stripes on the outside portion of the jacket around each sleeve. The stripes will be three inches from the end of each sleeve and the stripes will be spaced apart 1/4 inch.
- (g) Captains shall have three 1/2 inch wide gold stripes, from one seam to the other seam with the stripes on the outside portion of the jacket around each sleeve. The stripes will be three inches from the end of each sleeve and the stripes will be spaced apart 1/4 inch.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

- (h) The Undersheriff shall have four 1/2 in wide gold stripes, from one seam to the other seam with the stripes on the outside portion of the jacket around each sleeve. The stripes will be three inches from the end of each sleeve and the stripes will be spaced apart 1/8 inch.
- (i) Service stars for length of service shall be worn on long sleeved shirts and dress jackets. They are to be embroidered onto the long sleeve uniform shirt and dress jackets. The bottom of the service stars for long sleeve uniform shirts shall be sewn one half inch above the cuff seam on the dress of the sleeve. The stars are to be worn on the left sleeve only and be one half inch above the upper most sleeve stripe that corresponds with rank. One service star will represent 5 years of full time law enforcement service.

### **1046.6 POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, ENDORSEMENTS, AND ADVERTISEMENTS**

Unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff, Merced County Sheriff's Office employees may not wear any part of the uniform, be photographed wearing any part of the uniform, utilize a department badge, patch or other official insignia, or cause to be posted, published, or displayed, the image of another employee, or identify himself/herself as an employee of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to do any of the following (Government Code §§ 3206 and 3302):

- (a) Endorse, support, oppose, or contradict any political campaign or initiative.
- (b) Endorse, support, oppose, or contradict any social issue, cause, or religion.
- (c) Endorse, support, or oppose, any product, service, company or other commercial entity.
- (d) Appear in any commercial, social, or non-profit publication, or any motion picture, film, video, public broadcast, or any website.

### **1046.7 OPTIONAL EQUIPMENT - MAINTENANCE, AND REPLACEMENT**

- (a) Any of the items listed in the Uniform and Equipment Specifications as optional shall be purchased totally at the expense of the employee. No part of the purchase cost shall be offset by the Department for the cost of providing the Department issued item.
- (b) Maintenance of optional items shall be the financial responsibility of the purchasing employee. For example, repairs due to normal wear and tear.
- (c) Replacement of items listed in this order as optional shall be done as follows:
  - 1. When the item is no longer functional because of normal wear and tear, the employee bears the full cost of replacement.
  - 2. When the item is no longer functional because of damage in the course of the employee's duties, it shall be replaced following the procedures for the replacement of damaged personal property (see the Department Owned and Personal Property Policy).

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Uniform Regulations*

---

#### **1046.7.1 RETIREE BADGES**

The Sheriff may issue identification in the form of a badge, insignia, emblem, device, label, certificate, card or writing that clearly states the person has honorably retired from the Merced County Sheriff's Office. This identification is separate and distinct from the identification authorized by Penal Code § 25455 and referenced in the Retired Deputy CCW Endorsement Policy in this manual.

A badge issued to an honorably retired peace officer that is not affixed to a plaque or other memento will have the words "Honorably Retired" clearly visible on its face. A retiree shall be instructed that any such badge will remain the property of the Merced County Sheriff's Office and will be revoked in the event of misuse or abuse (Penal Code § 538d).

#### **1046.8 UNAUTHORIZED UNIFORMS, EQUIPMENT AND ACCESSORIES**

Merced County Sheriff's Office employees may not wear any uniform item, accessory or attachment unless specifically authorized in the Uniform and Equipment Specifications or by the Sheriff or designee.

Merced County Sheriff's Office employees may not use or carry any safety item, tool or other piece of equipment unless specifically authorized in the Uniform and Equipment Specifications or by the Sheriff or designee.

#### **1046.9 CLASS A HAT**

##### **1046.9.1 Class A Hat Requirement**

All Deputy Sheriff's with the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall have a Class A hat and keep it maintained for service. The Class A hat shall be worn as part of the Class A uniform.

##### **1046.9.2 Optional Class A Hat Usage**

It is understood that weather conditions may cause a necessity for a hat to be worn while working outside of ceremonial functions. The Class A hat may be worn by authorized personnel as part of the Class B uniform if so desired regardless of conditions. The Class A hat is not authorized to be worn with the Class C uniform.

##### **1046.9.3 Class A Hat Specifications**

The Class A hat, hat accessories and specifications approved for the Merced County Sheriff's Office are as follows:

Class A Hat: Stratton brand, olive color, straw, double brim, model number, S-4008 Campaign Style Hat

Class A Hat Cord: The Stratton hat shall have a Stratton gold cord with acorns worn on the brim of the hat. The cord will be tightened around the ribbon of the hat and trimmed so that the furthest most end of each acorn is 2 inches from the tightening ring of the cord.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Uniform Regulations*

---

**Class A Hat Strap:** The Stratton hat shall have a Stratton, black, 3-piece leather strap, center strap 1/2 inch wide, ends 3/8 inch wide with a snap-type swivel and closure. The strap is to be worn across the back of the head.

**Class A Hat Badge Holes Alignment:** The Class A hat will have two badge holes vertical and centered on the front of the hat and exactly one inch apart from the middle of one hole to the middle of the second hole. Measuring from the top of the brim on the center front of the hat, the bottom badge hole will be 1 and 3/4 inches from the top of the brim and the top badge hole will be 2 and 3/4 inches from the top of the brim.

**Class A Hat Badges:** Hat badges will be supplied by the department and should have the following dimensions as it pertains to the placement of the two badge screw fasteners. The hat badge will have two vertical screw fasteners exactly one inch apart from the center of one screw to the center of the other screw.

The Hat badge is 2 and 1/2 inches in height. The top screw fastener should be 1/2 inch from the top of the badge and centered on the back of the badge itself. The bottom screw fastener should be 1 and 1/2 inches from the top of the badge and centered on the back of the badge itself.

### **1046.9.4 Department Issued Property**

Hat badges are considered issued department equipment and shall be retained by the department in the event a designated employee is separated from employment with the Merced County Sheriff's Office. Any Deputy Sheriff who separates from employment with the department in good standing may request to retain their hat badge at the prevailing cost of replacement.

# Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships

## 1050.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure equal opportunity and effective employment practices by avoiding actual or perceived favoritism, discrimination or actual or potential conflicts of interest by or between members of this department. These employment practices include: recruiting, testing, hiring, compensation, assignment, use of facilities, access to training opportunities, supervision, performance appraisal, discipline and workplace safety and security.

### 1050.1.1 DEFINITIONS

**Business relationship** - Serving as an employee, independent contractor, compensated consultant, owner, board member, shareholder, or investor in an outside business, company, partnership, corporation, venture or other transaction, where the Department employee's annual interest, compensation, investment or obligation is greater than \$250.

**Conflict of interest** - Any actual, perceived or potential conflict of interest in which it reasonably appears that a department employee's action, inaction or decisions are or may be influenced by the employee's personal or business relationship.

**Nepotism** - The practice of showing favoritism to relatives over others in appointment, employment, promotion or advancement by any public official in a position to influence these personnel decisions.

**Personal relationship** - Includes marriage, cohabitation, dating or any other intimate relationship beyond mere friendship.

**Public official** - A supervisor, officer or employee vested with authority by law, rule or regulation or to whom authority has been delegated.

**Relative** - An employee's parent, stepparent, spouse, domestic partner, significant other, child (natural, adopted or step), sibling or grandparent.

**Subordinate** - An employee who is subject to the temporary or ongoing direct or indirect authority of a supervisor.

**Supervisor** - An employee who has temporary or ongoing direct or indirect authority over the actions, decisions, evaluation and/or performance of a subordinate employee.

## 1050.2 RESTRICTED DUTIES AND ASSIGNMENTS

The Department will not prohibit all personal or business relationships between employees. However, in order to avoid nepotism or other inappropriate conflicts, the following reasonable restrictions shall apply (Government Code § 12940):

- (a) Employees are prohibited from directly supervising, occupying a position in the line of supervision or being directly supervised by any other employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships*

---

1. If circumstances require that such a supervisor/subordinate relationship exist temporarily, the supervisor shall make every reasonable effort to defer matters pertaining to the involved employee to an uninvolved supervisor.
  2. When personnel and circumstances permit, the Department will attempt to make every reasonable effort to avoid placing employees in such supervisor/subordinate situations. The Department, however, reserves the right to transfer or reassign any employee to another position within the same classification in order to avoid conflicts with any provision of this policy.
- (b) Employees are prohibited from participating in, contributing to or recommending promotions, assignments, performance evaluations, transfers or other personnel decisions affecting an employee who is a relative or with whom they are involved in a personal or business relationship.
  - (c) Whenever possible, FTOs and other trainers will not be assigned to train relatives. FTOs and other trainers are prohibited from entering into or maintaining personal or business relationships with any employee they are assigned to train until such time as the training has been successfully completed and the employee is off probation.
  - (d) To avoid actual or perceived conflicts of interest, members of this department shall refrain from developing or maintaining personal or financial relationships with victims, witnesses or other individuals during the course of or as a direct result of any official contact.
  - (e) Except as required in the performance of official duties or, in the case of immediate relatives, employees shall not develop or maintain personal or financial relationships with any individual they know or reasonably should know is under criminal investigation, is a convicted felon, parolee, fugitive or registered sex offender or who engages in serious violations of state or federal laws.

#### 1050.2.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

Prior to entering into any personal or business relationship or other circumstance which the employee knows or reasonably should know could create a conflict of interest or other violation of this policy, the employee shall promptly notify his/her uninvolved, next highest level of supervisor.

Whenever any employee is placed in circumstances that would require the employee to take enforcement action or provide official information or services to any relative or individual with whom the employee is involved in a personal or business relationship, the employee shall promptly notify his/her uninvolved, immediate supervisor. In the event that no uninvolved supervisor is immediately available, the employee shall promptly notify dispatch to have another uninvolved employee either relieve the involved employee or minimally remain present to witness the action.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Nepotism and Conflicting Relationships*

---

### 1050.2.2 SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITY

Upon being notified of, or otherwise becoming aware of any circumstance that could result in or constitute an actual or potential violation of this policy, a supervisor shall take all reasonable steps to promptly mitigate or avoid such violations whenever possible. Supervisors shall also promptly notify the Sheriff of such actual or potential violations through the chain of command.

## Department Badges

### 1052.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The Merced County Sheriff's Office badge and uniform patch as well as the likeness of these items and the name of the Merced County Sheriff's Office are property of the Department and their use shall be restricted as set forth in this policy.

### 1052.2 POLICY

The uniform badge shall be issued to department members as a symbol of authority and the use and display of departmental badges shall be in strict compliance with this policy. Only authorized badges issued by this department shall be displayed, carried or worn by members while on duty or otherwise acting in an official or authorized capacity.

#### 1052.2.1 FLAT BADGE

Sworn deputies, with the written approval of the Sheriff may purchase, at his/her own expense, a flat badge capable of being carried in a wallet. The use of the flat badge is subject to all the same provisions of departmental policy as the uniform badge.

- (a) A deputy may sell, exchange, or transfer the flat badge he/she purchased to another deputy within the Merced County Sheriff's Office with the written approval of the Sheriff.
- (b) Should the flat badge become lost, damaged, or otherwise removed from the deputy's control, he/she shall make the proper notifications as outlined in the Department Owned and Personal Property Policy.
- (c) An honorably retired deputy may keep his/her flat badge upon retirement.
- (d) The purchase, carrying or display of a flat badge is not authorized for non-sworn personnel.

#### 1052.2.2 CIVILIAN PERSONNEL

Badges and departmental identification cards issued to non-sworn personnel shall be clearly marked to reflect the position of the assigned employee (e.g. Parking Control, Dispatcher).

- (a) Non-sworn personnel shall not display any department badge except as a part of his/her uniform and while on duty, or otherwise acting in an official and authorized capacity.
- (b) Non-sworn personnel shall not display any department badge or represent him/herself, on or off duty, in such a manner which would cause a reasonable person to believe that he/she is a sworn peace officer.

## *Department Badges*

---

### **1052.2.3 RETIREE UNIFORM BADGE**

Upon honorable retirement employees may purchase his/her assigned duty badge for display purposes. It is intended that the duty badge be used only as private memorabilia as other uses of the badge may be unlawful or in violation of this policy.

### **1052.3 UNAUTHORIZED USE**

Except as required for on-duty use by current employees, no badge designed for carry or display in a wallet, badge case or similar holder shall be issued to anyone other than a current or honorably retired peace officer.

Department badges are issued to all sworn employees and civilian uniformed employees for official use only. The department badge, shoulder patch or the likeness thereof, or the department name shall not be used for personal or private reasons including, but not limited to, letters, memoranda, and electronic communications such as electronic mail or web sites and web pages.

The use of the badge, uniform patch and department name for all material (printed matter, products or other items) developed for department use shall be subject to approval by the Sheriff.

Employees shall not loan his/her department badge or identification card to others and shall not permit the badge or identification card to be reproduced or duplicated.

### **1052.4 PERMITTED USE BY EMPLOYEE GROUPS**

The likeness of the department badge shall not be used without the expressed authorization of the Sheriff and shall be subject to the following:

- (a) The employee associations may use the likeness of the department badge for merchandise and official association business provided they are used in a clear representation of the association and not the Merced County Sheriff's Office. The following modifications shall be included:
  - 1. The text on the upper and lower ribbons is replaced with the name of the employee association.
  - 2. The badge number portion displays the acronym of the employee association.
- (b) The likeness of the department badge for endorsement of political candidates shall not be used without the expressed approval of the Sheriff.

# Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments

## 1054.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy establishes procedures for providing temporary modified-duty assignments. This policy is not intended to affect the rights or benefits of employees under federal or state law, County rules, current memorandums of understanding or collective bargaining agreements. For example, nothing in this policy affects the obligation of the Department to engage in a good faith, interactive process to consider reasonable accommodations for any employee with a temporary or permanent disability that is protected under federal or state law.

## 1054.2 POLICY

Subject to operational considerations, the Merced County Sheriff's Office may identify temporary modified-duty assignments for employees who have an injury or medical condition resulting in temporary work limitations or restrictions. A temporary assignment allows the employee to work, while providing the Department with a productive employee during the temporary period.

## 1054.3 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Priority consideration for temporary modified-duty assignments will be given to employees with work-related injuries or illnesses that are temporary in nature. Employees having disabilities covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) or the California Fair Employment and Housing Act (Government Code § 12940 et seq.) shall be treated equally, without regard to any preference for a work-related injury.

No position in the Merced County Sheriff's Office shall be created or maintained as a temporary modified-duty assignment.

Temporary modified-duty assignments are a management prerogative and not an employee right. The availability of temporary modified-duty assignments will be determined on a case-by-case basis, consistent with the operational needs of the Department. Temporary modified-duty assignments are subject to continuous reassessment, with consideration given to operational needs and the employee's ability to perform in a modified-duty assignment.

The Sheriff or the authorized designee may restrict employees working in temporary modified-duty assignments from wearing a uniform, displaying a badge, carrying a firearm, operating an emergency vehicle, engaging in outside employment, or being otherwise limited in employing their peace officer powers.

Temporary modified-duty assignments shall generally not exceed a cumulative total of 1,040 hours in any one-year period.

### 1054.3.1 ATTIRE REQUIREMENTS

Unless excused due to medical necessity or otherwise excused by a supervisor, an employee assigned to modified duty must comply with the department policies related to uniform, court appearances, and personal appearance standards.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments*

---

### **1054.4 PROCEDURE**

Employees may request a temporary modified-duty assignment for short-term injuries or illnesses.

Employees seeking a temporary modified-duty assignment should submit a written request to their Area Lieutenant or the authorized designees. The request should, as applicable, include a certification from the treating medical professional containing:

- (a) An assessment of the nature and probable duration of the illness or injury.
- (b) The prognosis for recovery.
- (c) The nature and scope of limitations and/or work restrictions.
- (d) A statement regarding any required workplace accommodations, mobility aids or medical devices.
- (e) A statement that the employee can safely perform the duties of the temporary modified-duty assignment.

The Area Lieutenant will make a recommendation through the chain of command to the Sheriff regarding temporary modified-duty assignments that may be available based on the needs of the Department and the limitations of the employee. The Sheriff or the authorized designee shall confer with the Department of Human Resources or the County Counsel as appropriate.

Requests for a temporary modified-duty assignment of 20 hours or less per week may be approved and facilitated by the Area Lieutenant, with notice to the Sheriff.

#### **1054.4.1 MODIFIED-DUTY SCHEDULES**

The schedules of employees assigned to modified duty may be adjusted to suit medical appointments or Department needs at the discretion of the appropriate division lieutenant.

The employee and his/her supervisors should be informed in writing of the schedule, assignment and limitations and restrictions as determined by the employee's health care provider.

#### **1054.4.2 ACCOUNTABILITY**

The employee's supervisor shall coordinate efforts to ensure proper time accountability and shall complete and process a change of shift/assignment form.

- (a) Employees on modified duty are responsible for coordinating required doctor visits and physical therapy appointments in advance with their supervisor to appropriately account for any duty time taken. Doctor visits and appointments for treatment of injuries or illnesses that are not work related shall be arranged during off-duty time or otherwise charged to the employee's sick leave.
- (b) Employees shall promptly submit a status report for each visit to their treating health care provider and shall immediately notify their supervisor of any change in restrictions or limitations as determined by their health care provider. An employee assigned to a

## *Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments*

---

modified-duty assignment shall provide a duty status report to their supervisor no less than once every 30 days while the employee is on modified duty.

- (c) Supervisors shall keep the respective Area Lieutenant apprised of the employee's status and ability to perform the modified-duty assignment. Modified-duty assignments that extend beyond 60 days will require a written status report and a request for an extension to the Area Lieutenant with an update of the employee's current status and anticipated date of return to regular duty. Extensions require approval of the Sheriff.
- (d) When it is determined that an employee on modified duty will return to regular duty, the supervisor shall notify the Area Lieutenant and complete and process a change of shift/assignment form. All training and certification necessary for return to duty shall be reviewed and updated as necessary.

### **1054.4.3 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

The Department reserves the right to require, prior to returning to full-duty status, a fitness-for-duty examination of any employee assigned to a modified-duty assignment or of any employee having been on such assignment. Such examinations shall be at the expense of the Department.

Prior to returning to full-duty status, employees shall be required to provide a statement signed by their health care provider indicating that they are medically cleared to perform the basic and essential job functions of their assignment without restriction or limitation.

### **1054.5 ACCOUNTABILITY**

Written notification of assignments, work schedules and any restrictions should be provided to employees assigned to temporary modified-duty assignments and their supervisors. Those assignments and schedules may be adjusted to accommodate department operations and the employee's medical appointments, as mutually agreed upon with the Area Lieutenant.

#### **1054.5.1 EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities of employees assigned to temporary modified duty shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Communicating and coordinating any required medical and physical therapy appointments in advance with their supervisors.
- (b) Promptly notifying their supervisors of any change in restrictions or limitations after each appointment with their treating medical professionals.
- (c) Communicating a status update to their supervisors no less than once every 30 days while assigned to temporary modified duty.
- (d) Submitting a written status report to the Area Lieutenant that contains a status update and anticipated date of return to full-duty when a temporary modified-duty assignment extends beyond 60 days.

## *Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments*

---

### **1054.5.2 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

The employee's immediate supervisor shall monitor and manage the work schedule of those assigned to temporary modified duty.

The responsibilities of supervisors shall include, but not be limited to:

- (a) Periodically apprising the Area Lieutenant of the status and performance of employees assigned to temporary modified duty.
- (b) Notifying the Area Lieutenant and ensuring that the required documentation facilitating a return to full duty is received from the employee.
- (c) Ensuring that employees returning to full duty have completed any required training and certification.

### **1054.6 MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS**

Prior to returning to full-duty status, employees shall be required to provide certification from their treating medical professionals stating that they are medically cleared to perform the essential functions of their jobs without restrictions or limitations.

The Department may require a fitness-for-duty examination prior to returning an employee to full-duty status, in accordance with the Fitness for Duty Policy.

### **1054.7 PREGNANCY**

If an employee is temporarily unable to perform regular duties due to a pregnancy, childbirth or a related medical condition, the employee will be treated the same as any other temporarily disabled employee (42 USC § 2000e(k)). A pregnant employee shall not be involuntarily transferred to a temporary modified-duty assignment.

#### **1054.7.1 NOTIFICATION**

Pregnant employees should notify their immediate supervisors as soon as practicable and provide a statement from their medical providers identifying any pregnancy-related job restrictions or limitations. If at any point during the pregnancy it becomes necessary for the employee to take a leave of absence, such leave shall be granted in accordance with the County's personnel rules and regulations regarding family and medical care leave.

### **1054.8 PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES**

Probationary employees who are assigned to a temporary modified-duty assignment may have their probation extended by a period of time equal to their assignment to temporary modified duty as directed by the Sheriff.

### **1054.9 MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION AND TRAINING**

Employees assigned to temporary modified duty shall maintain all certification, training and qualifications appropriate to both their regular and temporary duties, provided that the certification, training or qualifications are not in conflict with any medical limitations or restrictions. Employees

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Temporary Modified-Duty Assignments*

---

who are assigned to temporary modified duty shall inform their supervisors of any inability to maintain any certification, training or qualifications.

# Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking

## 1058.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy is intended to address issues associated with employee use of social networking sites and to provide guidelines for the regulation and balancing of employee speech and expression with the needs of the Department.

Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit or infringe upon any communication, speech or expression that is protected or privileged under law. This includes speech and expression protected under state or federal constitutions as well as labor or other applicable laws. For example, this policy does not limit an employee from speaking as a private citizen, including acting as an authorized member of a recognized bargaining unit, about matters of public concern, such as misconduct or corruption.

Employees are encouraged to consult with their supervisor regarding any questions arising from the application or potential application of this policy.

### 1058.1.1 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all forms of communication including, but not limited to, film, video, print media, public or private speech, use of all Internet services, including the World Wide Web, e-mail, file transfer, remote computer access, news services, social networking, social media, instant messaging, blogs, forums, video and other file-sharing sites.

## 1058.2 POLICY

Public employees occupy a trusted position in the community, and thus, their statements have the potential to contravene the policies and performance of this department. Due to the nature of the work and influence associated with the law enforcement profession, it is necessary that employees of this department be subject to certain reasonable limitations on their speech and expression. To achieve its mission and efficiently provide service to the public, the Merced County Sheriff's Office will carefully balance the individual employee's rights against the Department's needs and interests when exercising a reasonable degree of control over its employees' speech and expression.

## 1058.3 SAFETY

Employees should consider carefully the implications of their speech or any other form of expression when using the Internet. Speech and expression that may negatively affect the safety of the Merced County Sheriff's Office employees, such as posting personal information in a public forum, can result in compromising an employee's home address or family ties. Employees should therefore not disseminate or post any information on any forum or medium that could reasonably be anticipated to compromise the safety of any employee, an employee's family or associates.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## *Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking*

---

Examples of the type of information that could reasonably be expected to compromise safety include:

- Disclosing a photograph and name or address of a deputy who is working undercover.
- Disclosing the address of a fellow deputy.
- Otherwise disclosing where another deputy can be located off-duty.

### **1058.4 PROHIBITED SPEECH, EXPRESSION AND CONDUCT**

To meet the Department's safety, performance and public-trust needs, the following is prohibited unless the speech is otherwise protected (for example, an employee speaking as a private citizen, including acting as an authorized member of a recognized bargaining unit, on a matter of public concern):

- (a) Speech or expression made pursuant to an official duty that tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Merced County Sheriff's Office or its employees.
- (b) Speech or expression that, while not made pursuant to an official duty, is significantly linked to, or related to, the Merced County Sheriff's Office and tends to compromise or damage the mission, function, reputation or professionalism of the Merced County Sheriff's Office or its employees.
- (c) Speech or expression that could reasonably be foreseen as having a negative impact on the credibility of the employee as a witness. For example, posting statements or expressions to a website that glorify or endorse dishonesty, unlawful discrimination or illegal behavior.
- (d) Speech or expression of any form that could reasonably be foreseen as having a negative impact on the safety of the employees of the Department. For example, a statement on a blog that provides specific details as to how and when prisoner transportations are made could reasonably be foreseen as potentially jeopardizing employees by informing criminals of details that could facilitate an escape or attempted escape.
- (e) Speech or expression that is contrary to the canons of the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics as adopted by the Merced County Sheriff's Office.
- (f) Use or disclosure, through whatever means, of any information, photograph, video or other recording obtained or accessible as a result of employment with the Department for financial or personal gain, or any disclosure of such materials without the express authorization of the Sheriff or the authorized designee.
- (g) Posting, transmitting or disseminating any photographs, video or audio recordings, likenesses or images of department logos, emblems, uniforms, badges, patches, marked vehicles, equipment or other material that specifically identifies the Merced

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking*

---

County Sheriff's Office on any personal or social networking or other website or web page, without the express authorization of the Sheriff.

- (h) Accessing websites for non-authorized purposes, or use of any personal communication device, game device or media device, whether personally or department owned, for personal purposes while on-duty, except in the following circumstances:
  - 1. When brief personal communication may be warranted by the circumstances (e.g., inform family of extended hours).
  - 2. During authorized breaks such usage should be limited as much as practicable to areas out of sight and sound of the public and shall not be disruptive to the work environment.

Employees must take reasonable and prompt action to remove any content, including content posted by others, that is in violation of this policy from any web page or website maintained by the employee (e.g., social or personal website).

#### 1058.4.1 UNAUTHORIZED ENDORSEMENTS AND ADVERTISEMENTS

While employees are not restricted from engaging in the following activities as private citizens or as authorized members of a recognized bargaining unit, employees may not represent the Merced County Sheriff's Office or identify themselves in any way that could be reasonably perceived as representing the Merced County Sheriff's Office in order to do any of the following, unless specifically authorized by the Sheriff (Government Code § 3206; Government Code § 3302):

- (a) Endorse, support, oppose or contradict any political campaign or initiative.
- (b) Endorse, support, oppose or contradict any social issue, cause or religion.
- (c) Endorse, support or oppose any product, service, company or other commercial entity.
- (d) Appear in any commercial, social or nonprofit publication or any motion picture, film, video, public broadcast or on any website.

Additionally, when it can reasonably be construed that an employee, acting in his/her individual capacity or through an outside group or organization (e.g., bargaining group), is affiliated with this department, the employee shall give a specific disclaiming statement that any such speech or expression is not representative of the Merced County Sheriff's Office.

Employees retain their right to vote as they choose, to support candidates of their choice and to express their opinions as private citizens, including as authorized members of a recognized bargaining unit, on political subjects and candidates at all times while off-duty. However, employees may not use their official authority or influence to interfere with or affect the result of an election or a nomination for office. Employees are also prohibited from directly or indirectly using their official authority to coerce, command or advise another employee to pay, lend or contribute anything of value to a party, committee, organization, agency or person for political purposes (5 USC § 1502).

## *Employee Speech, Expression and Social Networking*

---

### **1058.5 PRIVACY EXPECTATION**

Employees forfeit any expectation of privacy with regard to e-mails, texts or anything published or maintained through file-sharing software or any Internet site (e.g., Facebook, MySpace) that is accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed on any department technology system.

The Department reserves the right to access, audit and disclose for whatever reason any message, including attachments, and any information accessed, transmitted, received or reviewed over any technology that is issued or maintained by the Department. This includes the department e-mail system, computer network or any information placed into storage on any department system or device.

It also includes records of all key strokes or web-browsing history made at any department computer or over any department network.

The fact that access to a database, service or website requires a user name or password will not create an expectation of privacy if it is accessed through a department computer or network. However, the Department may not require an employee to disclose a personal user name or password or open a personal social website, except when access is reasonably believed to be relevant to the investigation of allegations of work related misconduct (Labor Code § 980).

### **1058.6 CONSIDERATIONS**

In determining whether to grant authorization of any speech or conduct that may be prohibited under this policy, the factors that the Sheriff or authorized designee should consider include:

- (a) Whether the speech or conduct would negatively affect the efficiency of delivering public services.
- (b) Whether the speech or conduct would be contrary to the good order of the Department or the efficiency or morale of its members.
- (c) Whether the speech or conduct would reflect unfavorably upon the Department.
- (d) Whether the speech or conduct would negatively affect the member's appearance of impartiality in the performance of his/her duties.
- (e) Whether similar speech or conduct has been previously authorized.
- (f) Whether the speech or conduct may be protected and outweighs any interest of the Department.

### **1058.7 TRAINING**

Subject to available resources, the Department should provide training regarding employee speech and the use of social networking to all members of the Department.

## Anti-Retaliation

### 1059.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

This policy prohibits retaliation against members who identify workplace issues, such as fraud, waste, abuse of authority, gross mismanagement or any inappropriate conduct or practices, including violations that may pose a threat to the health, safety or well-being of members.

This policy does not prohibit actions taken for nondiscriminatory or non-retaliatory reasons, such as discipline for cause.

These guidelines are intended to supplement and not limit members' access to other applicable remedies. Nothing in this policy shall diminish the rights or remedies of a member pursuant to any applicable federal law, provision of the U.S. Constitution, law, ordinance or memorandum of understanding.

### 1059.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office has a zero tolerance for retaliation and is committed to taking reasonable steps to protect from retaliation members who, in good faith, engage in permitted behavior or who report or participate in the reporting or investigation of workplace issues. All complaints of retaliation will be taken seriously and will be promptly and appropriately investigated.

### 1059.3 RETALIATION PROHIBITED

No member may retaliate against any person for engaging in lawful or otherwise permitted behavior; for opposing a practice believed to be unlawful, unethical, discriminatory or retaliatory; for reporting or making a complaint under this policy; or for participating in any investigation related to a complaint under this or any other policy.

Retaliation includes any adverse action or conduct, including but not limited to:

- Refusing to hire or denying a promotion.
- Extending the probationary period.
- Unjustified reassignment of duties or change of work schedule.
- Real or implied threats or other forms of intimidation to dissuade the reporting of wrongdoing or filing of a complaint, or as a consequence of having reported or participated in protected activity.
- Taking unwarranted disciplinary action.
- Spreading rumors about the person filing the complaint or about the alleged wrongdoing.
- Shunning or unreasonably avoiding a person because he/she has engaged in protected activity.

## *Anti-Retaliation*

---

### **1059.4 COMPLAINTS OF RETALIATION**

Any member who feels he/she has been retaliated against in violation of this policy should promptly report the matter to any supervisor, command staff member, Sheriff or the County Director of Administrative Services.

Members shall act in good faith, not engage in unwarranted reporting of trivial or minor deviations or transgressions, and make reasonable efforts to verify facts before making any complaint in order to avoid baseless allegations. Members shall not report or state an intention to report information or an allegation knowing it to be false, with willful or reckless disregard for the truth or falsity of the information or otherwise act in bad faith.

Investigations are generally more effective when the identity of the reporting member is known, thereby allowing investigators to obtain additional information from the reporting member. However, complaints may be made anonymously. All reasonable efforts shall be made to protect the reporting member's identity. However, confidential information may be disclosed to the extent required by law or to the degree necessary to conduct an adequate investigation and make a determination regarding a complaint. In some situations, the investigative process may not be complete unless the source of the information and a statement by the member is part of the investigative process.

### **1059.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Supervisors are expected to remain familiar with this policy and ensure that members under their command are aware of its provisions.

The responsibilities of supervisors include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring complaints of retaliation are investigated as provided in the Personnel Complaints Policy.
- (b) Receiving all complaints in a fair and impartial manner.
- (c) Documenting the complaint and any steps taken to resolve the problem.
- (d) Acknowledging receipt of the complaint, notifying the Sheriff via the chain of command and explaining to the member how the complaint will be handled.
- (e) Taking appropriate and reasonable steps to mitigate any further violations of this policy.
- (f) Monitoring the work environment to ensure that any member making a complaint is not subjected to further retaliation.
- (g) Periodic follow-up with the complainant to ensure that retaliation is not continuing.
- (h) Not interfering with or denying the right of a member to make any complaint.
- (i) Taking reasonable steps to accommodate requests for assignment or schedule changes made by a member who may be the target of retaliation if it would likely mitigate the potential for further violations of this policy.

## *Anti-Retaliation*

---

### **1059.6 COMMAND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Sheriff should communicate to all supervisors the prohibition against retaliation.

Command staff shall treat all complaints as serious matters and shall ensure that prompt actions take place, including but not limited to:

- (a) Communicating to all members the prohibition against retaliation.
- (b) The timely review of complaint investigations.
- (c) Remediation of any inappropriate conduct or condition and instituting measures to eliminate or minimize the likelihood of recurrence.
- (d) The timely communication of the outcome to the complainant.

### **1059.7 WHISTLE-BLOWING**

California law protects members who (Labor Code § 1102.5; Government Code § 53296 et seq.):

- (a) Report a violation of a state or federal statute or regulation to a government or law enforcement agency, including the member's supervisor or any other member with the authority to investigate the reported violation.
- (b) Provide information or testify before a public body if the member has reasonable cause to believe a violation of law occurred.
- (c) Refuse to participate in an activity that would result in a violation of a state or federal statute or regulation.
- (d) File a complaint with a local agency about gross mismanagement or a significant waste of funds, abuse of authority or a substantial and specific danger to public health or safety. Members shall exhaust all available administrative remedies prior to filing a formal complaint.
- (e) Are family members who have engaged in any protected acts described above.

Members are encouraged to report any legal violations through the chain of command (Labor Code § 1102.5).

Members who believe they have been the subject of retaliation for engaging in such protected behaviors should promptly report it to a supervisor. Supervisors should refer the complaint to the Internal Affairs Investigator for investigation pursuant to the Personnel Complaints Policy.

#### **1059.7.1 DISPLAY OF WHISTLE-BLOWER LAWS**

The Department shall display a notice to members regarding their rights and responsibilities under the whistle-blower laws, including the whistle-blower hotline maintained by the Office of the Attorney General (Labor Code § 1102.8).

## *Anti-Retaliation*

---

### **1059.8 RECORDS RETENTION AND RELEASE**

The Records Supervisor shall ensure that documentation of investigations is maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedules.

### **1059.9 TRAINING**

The policy should be reviewed with each new member.

All members should receive periodic refresher training on the requirements of this policy.

## Illness and Injury Prevention

### 1060.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to establish an ongoing and effective plan to reduce the incidence of illness and injury for members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office, in accordance with the requirements of 8 CCR § 3203.

This policy specifically applies to illness and injury that results in lost time or that requires medical treatment beyond first aid. Although this policy provides the essential guidelines for a plan that reduces illness and injury, it may be supplemented by procedures outside the Policy Manual.

This policy does not supersede, but supplements any related Countywide safety efforts.

### 1060.2 POLICY

The Merced County Sheriff's Office is committed to providing a safe environment for its members and visitors and to minimizing the incidence of work-related illness and injuries. The Department will establish and maintain an Illness and Injury Prevention program and will provide tools, training and safeguards designed to reduce the potential for accidents, illness and injuries. It is the intent of the Department to comply with all laws and regulations related to occupational safety.

### 1060.3 ILLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTION PLAN

The Director of Administrative Services is responsible for developing an illness and injury prevention plan that shall include:

- (a) Workplace safety and health training programs.
- (b) Regularly scheduled safety meetings.
- (c) Posted or distributed safety information.
- (d) A system for members to anonymously inform management about workplace hazards.
- (e) Establishment of a safety and health committee that will:
  - 1. Meet regularly.
  - 2. Prepare a written record of safety and health committee meetings.
  - 3. Review the results of periodic scheduled inspections.
  - 4. Review investigations of accidents and exposures.
  - 5. Make suggestions to command staff for the prevention of future incidents.
  - 6. Review investigations of alleged hazardous conditions.
  - 7. Submit recommendations to assist in the evaluation of member safety suggestions.
  - 8. Assess the effectiveness of efforts made by the Department to meet relevant standards.

## *Illness and Injury Prevention*

---

- (f) Establishment of a process to ensure serious illnesses or injuries and death are reported as required by the Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (Cal/OSHA) (8 CCR § 342).

### **1060.4 DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES RESPONSIBILITIES**

The responsibilities of the Director of Administrative Services include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Managing and implementing a plan to reduce the incidence of member illness and injury.
- (b) Ensuring that a system of communication is in place that facilitates a continuous flow of safety and health information between supervisors and members. This system shall include:
  - 1. New member orientation that includes a discussion of safety and health policies and procedures.
  - 2. Regular member review of the illness and injury prevention plan.
- (c) Ensuring that all safety and health policies and procedures are clearly communicated and understood by all members.
- (d) Taking reasonable steps to ensure that all members comply with safety rules in order to maintain a safe work environment. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - 1. Informing members of the illness and injury prevention guidelines.
  - 2. Recognizing members who perform safe work practices.
  - 3. Ensuring that the member evaluation process includes member safety performance.
  - 4. Ensuring department compliance to meet standards regarding the following:
    - (a) Respiratory protection (8 CCR § 5144)
    - (b) Blood borne pathogens (8 CCR § 5193)
    - (c) Aerosol transmissible diseases (8 CCR § 5199)
    - (d) Heat illness (8 CCR § 3395)
    - (e) Emergency Action Plan (8 CCR § 3220)
    - (f) Fire Prevention Plan (8 CCR § 3221)
- (e) Making available the Identified Hazards and Correction Record form to document inspections, unsafe conditions or work practices, and actions taken to correct unsafe conditions and work practices.
- (f) Making available the Investigation/Corrective Action Report to document individual incidents or accidents.
- (g) Making available a form to document the safety and health training of each member. This form will include the member's name or other identifier, training dates, type of training and training providers.
- (h) Conducting and documenting a regular review of the illness and injury prevention plan.

## *Illness and Injury Prevention*

---

### **1060.5 SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Supervisor responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Ensuring member compliance with illness and injury prevention guidelines and answering questions from members about this policy.
- (b) Training, counseling, instructing or making informal verbal admonishments any time safety performance is deficient. Supervisors may also initiate discipline when it is reasonable and appropriate under the Standards of Conduct Policy.
- (c) Establishing and maintaining communication with members on health and safety issues. This is essential for an injury-free, productive workplace.
- (d) Completing required forms and reports relating to illness and injury prevention; such forms and reports shall be submitted to the Director of Administrative Services.
- (e) Notifying the Director of Administrative Services when:
  - 1. New substances, processes, procedures or equipment that present potential new hazards are introduced into the work environment.
  - 2. New, previously unidentified hazards are recognized.
  - 3. Occupational illnesses and injuries occur.
  - 4. New and/or permanent or intermittent members are hired or reassigned to processes, operations or tasks for which a hazard evaluation has not been previously conducted.
  - 5. Workplace conditions warrant an inspection.

### **1060.6 HAZARDS**

All members should report and/or take reasonable steps to correct unsafe or unhealthy work conditions, practices or procedures in a timely manner. Members should make their reports to a supervisor (as a general rule, their own supervisors).

Supervisors should make reasonable efforts to correct unsafe or unhealthy work conditions in a timely manner, based on the severity of the hazard. These hazards should be corrected when observed or discovered, when it is reasonable to do so. When a hazard exists that cannot be immediately abated without endangering members or property, supervisors should protect or remove all exposed members from the area or item, except those necessary to correct the existing condition.

Members who are necessary to correct the hazardous condition shall be provided with the necessary protection.

All significant actions taken and dates they are completed shall be documented on an Identified Hazards and Correction Record form. This form should be forwarded to the Director of Administrative Services via the chain of command.

## *Illness and Injury Prevention*

---

The Director of Administrative Services will take appropriate action to ensure the illness and injury prevention plan addresses potential hazards upon such notification.

### **1060.7 INSPECTIONS**

Safety inspections are crucial to a safe work environment. These inspections identify and evaluate workplace hazards and permit mitigation of those hazards. A hazard assessment checklist should be used for documentation and to ensure a thorough assessment of the work environment.

The Director of Administrative Services shall ensure that the appropriate documentation is completed for each inspection.

#### **1060.7.1 EQUIPMENT**

Members are charged with daily vehicle inspections of their assigned vehicles and of their personal protective equipment (PPE) prior to working in the field. Members shall complete the Identified Hazards and Correction Record form if an unsafe condition cannot be immediately corrected. Members should forward this form to their supervisors.

### **1060.8 INVESTIGATIONS**

Any member sustaining any work-related illness or injury, as well as any member who is involved in any accident or hazardous substance exposure while on-duty shall report such event as soon as practicable to a supervisor. Members observing or learning of a potentially hazardous condition are to promptly report the condition to their immediate supervisors.

A supervisor receiving such a report should personally investigate the incident or ensure that an investigation is conducted. Investigative procedures for workplace accidents and hazardous substance exposures should include:

- (a) A visit to the accident scene as soon as possible.
- (b) An interview of the injured member and witnesses.
- (c) An examination of the workplace for factors associated with the accident/exposure.
- (d) Determination of the cause of the accident/exposure.
- (e) Corrective action to prevent the accident/exposure from reoccurring.
- (f) Documentation of the findings and corrective actions taken.
- (g) Completion of an Investigation/Corrective Action Report form.
- (h) Completion of an Identified Hazards and Correction Record form.

Additionally, the supervisor should proceed with the steps to report an on-duty injury, as required under the Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury Reporting Policy, in conjunction with this investigation to avoid duplication and ensure timely reporting.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Illness and Injury Prevention*

---

#### **1060.9 TRAINING**

The Director of Administrative Services will provide all members, including supervisors, with training on general and job-specific workplace safety and health practices. Training shall be provided:

- (a) To supervisors to familiarize them with the safety and health hazards to which members under their immediate direction and control may be exposed.
- (b) To all members with respect to hazards specific to each member's job assignment.
- (c) To all members given new job assignments for which training has not previously been provided.
- (d) Whenever new substances, processes, procedures or equipment are introduced to the workplace and represent a new hazard.
- (e) Whenever the Department is made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.

##### **1060.9.1 TRAINING TOPICS**

The Training Manager shall ensure that training includes:

- (a) Reporting unsafe conditions, work practices and injuries, and informing a supervisor when additional instruction is needed.
- (b) Use of appropriate clothing, including gloves and footwear.
- (c) Use of respiratory equipment.
- (d) Availability of toilet, hand-washing and drinking-water facilities.
- (e) Provisions for medical services and first aid.
- (f) Handling of blood borne pathogens and other biological hazards.
- (g) Prevention of heat and cold stress.
- (h) Identification and handling of hazardous materials, including chemical hazards to which members could be exposed, and review of resources for identifying and mitigating hazards (e.g., hazard labels, Safety Data Sheets (SDS)).
- (i) Mitigation of physical hazards, such as heat and cold stress, noise, and ionizing and non-ionizing radiation.
- (j) Identification and mitigation of ergonomic hazards, including working on ladders or in a stooped posture for prolonged periods.
- (k) Back exercises/stretchers and proper lifting techniques.
- (l) Avoidance of slips and falls.
- (m) Good housekeeping and fire prevention.
- (n) Other job-specific safety concerns.

#### **1060.10 RECORDS**

Records and training documentation relating to illness and injury prevention will be maintained in accordance with the established records retention schedule.

## Line-of-Duty Deaths

### 1061.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to members of the Merced County Sheriff's Office in the event of the death of a member occurring in the line of duty and to direct the Department in providing proper support for the member's survivors.

The Sheriff may also apply some or all of this policy in situations where members are injured in the line of duty and the injuries are life-threatening.

#### 1061.1.1 DEFINITIONS

Definitions related to this policy include:

**Line-of-duty death** - The death of a sworn member during the course of performing law enforcement-related functions while on- or off-duty, or a civilian member during the course of performing their assigned duties.

**Survivors** - Immediate family members of the deceased member, which can include spouse, children, parents, other next of kin or significant others. The determination of who should be considered a survivor for purposes of this policy should be made on a case-by-case basis given the individual's relationship with the member and whether the individual was previously designated by the deceased member.

### 1061.2 POLICY

It is the policy of the Merced County Sheriff's Office to make appropriate notifications and to provide assistance and support to survivors and coworkers of a member who dies in the line of duty.

It is also the policy of this department to respect the requests of the survivors when they conflict with these guidelines, as appropriate.

### 1061.3 INITIAL ACTIONS BY COMMAND STAFF

- (a) Upon learning of a line-of-duty death, the deceased member's supervisor should provide all reasonably available information to Command Staff.
  1. Communication of information concerning the member and the incident should be restricted to secure networks to avoid interception by the media or others (see the Public Information Officer section of this policy).
- (b) The on duty Sergeant should ensure that notifications are made in accordance with the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths and Major Incident Notification policies as applicable.
- (c) If the member has been transported to the hospital, the on duty Sergeant or the designee should respond to the hospital to assume temporary responsibilities as the Hospital Liaison.
- (d) The Sheriff or the authorized designee should assign members to handle survivor notifications and assign members to the roles of Hospital Liaison (to relieve the

## *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

temporary Hospital Liaison) and the Department Liaison as soon as practicable (see the Notifying Survivors section and the Department Liaison and Hospital Liaison subsections in this policy).

### **1061.4 NOTIFYING SURVIVORS**

Survivors should be notified as soon as possible in order to avoid the survivors hearing about the incident in other ways.

The Sheriff or the authorized designee should review the deceased member's emergency contact information and make accommodations to respect the member's wishes and instructions specific to notifying survivors. However, notification should not be excessively delayed because of attempts to assemble a notification team in accordance with the member's wishes.

The Sheriff or the authorized designee should select at least two members to conduct notification of survivors, one of which may be the Department Chaplain.

Notifying members should:

- (a) Make notifications in a direct and compassionate manner, communicating as many facts of the incident as possible, including the current location of the member. Information that is not verified should not be provided until an investigation has been completed.
- (b) Determine the method of notifying surviving children by consulting with other survivors and taking into account factors such as the child's age, maturity and current location (e.g., small children at home, children in school).
- (c) Plan for concerns such as known health concerns of survivors or language barriers.
- (d) Offer to transport survivors to the hospital, if appropriate. Survivors should be transported in department vehicles. Notifying members shall inform the Hospital Liaison over a secure network that the survivors are on their way to the hospital and should remain at the hospital while the survivors are present.
- (e) When survivors are not at their residences or known places of employment, actively seek information and follow leads from neighbors, other law enforcement, postal authorities and other sources of information in order to accomplish notification in as timely a fashion as possible. Notifying members shall not disclose the reason for their contact other than a family emergency.
- (f) If making notification at a survivor's workplace, ask a workplace supervisor for the use of a quiet, private room to meet with the survivor. Members shall not inform the workplace supervisor of the purpose of their visit other than to indicate that it is a family emergency.
- (g) Offer to call other survivors, friends or clergy to support the survivors and to avoid leaving survivors alone after notification.
- (h) Assist the survivors with meeting childcare or other immediate needs.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

- (i) Provide other assistance to survivors and take reasonable measures to accommodate their needs, wishes and desires. Care should be taken not to make promises or commitments to survivors that cannot be met.
- (j) Inform the survivors of the name and phone number of the Survivor Support Liaison (see the Survivor Support Liaison section of this policy), if known, and the Department Liaison.
- (k) Provide their contact information to the survivors before departing.
- (l) Document the survivor's names and contact information, as well as the time and location of notification. This information should be forwarded to the Department Liaison.
- (m) Inform the Sheriff or the authorized designee once survivor notifications have been made so that other Merced County Sheriff's Office members may be apprised that survivor notifications are complete.

#### **1061.4.1 OUT-OF-AREA NOTIFICATIONS**

The Department Liaison should request assistance from law enforcement agencies in appropriate jurisdictions for in-person notification to survivors who are out of the area.

- (a) The Department Liaison should contact the appropriate jurisdiction using a secure network and provide the assisting agency with the name and telephone number of the department member that the survivors can call for more information following the notification by the assisting agency.
- (b) The Department Liaison may assist in making transportation arrangements for the member's survivors, but will not obligate the Department to pay travel expenses without the authorization of the Sheriff.

#### **1061.5 NOTIFYING DEPARTMENT MEMBERS**

Supervisors or members designated by the Sheriff are responsible for notifying department members of the line-of-duty death as soon as possible after the survivor notification is made. Notifications and related information should be communicated in person or using secure networks and should not be transmitted over the radio.

Notifications should be made in person and as promptly as possible to all members on-duty at the time of the incident. Members reporting for subsequent shifts within a short amount of time should be notified in person at the beginning of their shift. Members reporting for duty from their residence should be instructed to contact their supervisor as soon as practicable. Those members who are working later shifts or are on days off should be notified by phone as soon as practicable.

Members having a close bond with the deceased member should be notified of the incident in person. Supervisors should consider assistance (e.g., peer support group, modifying work schedules, approving sick leave) for members who are especially affected by the incident.

Supervisors should direct members not to disclose any information outside the Department regarding the deceased member or the incident.

## *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

### **1061.6 LIAISONS AND COORDINATORS**

The Sheriff or the authorized designee should select members to serve as liaisons and coordinators to handle responsibilities related to a line-of-duty death, including, but not limited to:

- (a) Department Liaison.
- (b) Hospital Liaison.
- (c) Survivor Support Liaison.
- (d) Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) coordinator.
- (e) Funeral Liaison.
- (f) Mutual aid coordinator.
- (g) Benefits Liaison.
- (h) Finance coordinator.

Liaisons and coordinators will be directed by the Department Liaison and should be given sufficient duty time to complete their assignments.

Members may be assigned responsibilities of more than one liaison or coordinator position depending on available department resources. The Department Liaison may assign separate liaisons and coordinators to accommodate multiple family units, if needed.

#### **1061.6.1 DEPARTMENT LIAISON**

The Department Liaison should be a member of Command Staff to effectively coordinate department resources, and should serve as a facilitator between the deceased member's survivors and the Department. The Department Liaison reports directly to the Sheriff. The Department Liaison's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Directing the other liaisons and coordinators in fulfilling survivors' needs and requests. Consideration should be given to organizing the effort using the National Incident Management System (NIMS).
- (b) Establishing contact with survivors within 24 hours of the incident and providing them contact information.
- (c) Advising survivors of the other liaison and coordinator positions and their roles and responsibilities.
- (d) Identifying locations that will accommodate a law enforcement funeral and presenting the options to the appropriate survivors, who will select the location.
- (e) Coordinating all official law enforcement notifications and arrangements.
- (f) Making necessary contacts for authorization to display flags at half-mast.
- (g) Ensuring that department members are reminded of appropriate information—sharing restrictions regarding the release of information that could undermine future legal proceedings.
- (h) Coordinating security checks of the member's residence as necessary and reasonable.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

- (i) Serving as a liaison with visiting law enforcement agencies during memorial and funeral services.

#### 1061.6.2 HOSPITAL LIAISON

The Hospital Liaison should work with hospital personnel to:

- (a) Arrange for appropriate and separate waiting areas for:
  - 1. The survivors and others whose presence is requested by the survivors.
  - 2. Department members and friends of the deceased member.
  - 3. Media personnel.
- (b) Ensure, as much as practicable, that any suspects who are in the hospital and their families or friends are not in close proximity to the member's survivors or Merced County Sheriff's Office members (except for members who may be guarding the suspect).
- (c) Ensure that survivors receive timely updates regarding the member before information is released to others.
- (d) Arrange for survivors to have private time with the member, if requested.
  - 1. The Hospital Liaison or hospital personnel may need to explain the condition of the member to the survivors to prepare them accordingly.
  - 2. The Hospital Liaison should accompany the survivors into the room, if requested.
- (e) Stay with survivors and ensure that they are provided with other assistance as needed at the hospital.
- (f) If applicable, explain to the survivors why an autopsy may be needed.
- (g) Ensure hospital bills are directed to the Department, that the survivors are not asked to sign as guarantor of payment for any hospital treatment and that the member's residence address, insurance information and next of kin are not included on hospital paperwork.

Other responsibilities of the Hospital Liaison include, but are not limited to:

- Arranging transportation for the survivors back to their residence.
- Working with investigators to gather and preserve the deceased member's equipment and other items that may be of evidentiary value.
- Documenting his/her actions at the conclusion of his/her duties.

#### 1061.6.3 SURVIVOR SUPPORT LIAISON

The Survivor Support Liaison should work with the Department Liaison to fulfill the immediate needs and requests of the survivors of any member who has died in the line of duty, and serve as the long-term department contact for survivors.

The Survivor Support Liaison should be selected by the deceased member's Area Lieutenant. The following should be considered when selecting the Survivor Support Liaison:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

- The liaison should be an individual the survivors know and with whom they are comfortable working.
- If the survivors have no preference, the selection may be made from names recommended by the deceased member's supervisor and/or coworkers. The deceased member's partner or close friends may not be the best selections for this assignment because the emotional connection to the member or survivors may impair their ability to conduct adequate liaison duties.
- The liaison must be willing to assume the assignment with an understanding of the emotional and time demands involved.

The responsibilities of the Survivor Support Liaison include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Arranging for transportation of survivors to hospitals, places of worship, funeral homes and other locations, as appropriate.
- (b) Communicating with the Department Liaison regarding appropriate security measures for the family residence, as needed.
- (c) If requested by the survivors, providing assistance with instituting methods of screening telephone calls made to their residence after the incident.
- (d) Providing assistance with travel and lodging arrangements for out-of-town survivors.
- (e) Returning the deceased member's personal effects from the Department and the hospital to the survivors. The following should be considered when returning the personal effects:
  - 1. Items should not be delivered to the survivors until they are ready to receive the items.
  - 2. Items not retained as evidence should be delivered in a clean, unmarked box.
  - 3. All clothing not retained as evidence should be cleaned and made presentable (e.g., items should be free of blood or other signs of the incident).
  - 4. The return of some personal effects may be delayed due to ongoing investigations.
- (f) Assisting with the return of department-issued equipment that may be at the deceased member's residence.
  - 1. Unless there are safety concerns, the return of the equipment should take place after the funeral at a time and in a manner considerate of the survivors' wishes.
- (g) Working with the CISM coordinator to ensure that survivors have access to available counseling services.
- (h) Coordinating with the department's Public Information Officer ([PIO]) to brief the survivors on pending press releases related to the incident and to assist the survivors with media relations in accordance with their wishes (see the Public Information Officer section of this policy).
- (i) Briefing survivors on investigative processes related to the line-of-duty death, such as criminal, internal and administrative investigations.

## *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

- (j) Informing survivors of any related criminal proceedings and accompanying them to such proceedings.
- (k) Introducing survivors to prosecutors, victim's assistance personnel and other involved personnel as appropriate.
- (l) Maintaining long-term contact with survivors and taking measures to sustain a supportive relationship (e.g., follow-up visits, phone calls, cards on special occasions, special support during holidays).
- (m) Inviting survivors to department activities, memorial services or other functions as appropriate.

Survivor Support Liaisons providing services after an incident resulting in multiple members being killed should coordinate with and support each other through conference calls or meetings as necessary.

The Department recognizes that the duties of a Survivor Support Liaison will often affect regular assignments over many years, and is committed to supporting members in the assignment.

If needed, the Survivor Support Liaison should be issued a personal communication device (PCD) owned by the Department to facilitate communications necessary to the assignment. The department-issued PCD shall be used in accordance with the Personal Communication Devices Policy.

### 1061.6.4 CRITICAL INCIDENT STRESS MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR

The CISM coordinator should work with the Sheriff or the authorized designee, liaisons, coordinators and other resources to make CISM and counseling services available to members and survivors who are impacted by a line-of-duty death. The responsibilities of the CISM coordinator include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Identifying members who are likely to be significantly affected by the incident and may have an increased need for CISM and counseling services, including:
  - 1. Members involved in the incident.
  - 2. Members who witnessed the incident.
  - 3. Members who worked closely with the deceased member but were not involved in the incident.
- (b) Ensuring that members who were involved in or witnessed the incident are relieved of department responsibilities until they can receive CISM support as appropriate and possible.
- (c) Ensuring that CISM and counseling resources (e.g., peer support, debriefing, grief counselors) are available to members as soon as reasonably practicable following the line-of-duty death.
- (d) Coordinating with the Survivor Support Liaison to ensure survivors are aware of available CISM and counseling services and assisting with arrangements as needed.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

- (e) Following up with members and the Survivor Support Liaison in the months following the incident to determine if additional CISM or counseling services are needed.

#### 1061.6.5 FUNERAL LIAISON

The Funeral Liaison should work with the Department Liaison, Survivor Support Liaison and survivors to coordinate funeral arrangements to the extent the survivors wish. The Funeral Liaison's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Assisting survivors in working with the funeral director regarding funeral arrangements and briefing them on law enforcement funeral procedures.
- (b) Completing funeral notification to other law enforcement agencies.
- (c) Coordinating the funeral activities of the Department, including, but not limited to the following:
  - 1. Honor Guard
    - (a) Casket watch
    - (b) Color guard
    - (c) Pallbearers
    - (d) Bell/rifle salute
  - 2. Bagpipers/bugler
  - 3. Uniform for burial
  - 4. Flag presentation
  - 5. Last radio call
- (d) Briefing the Sheriff and command staff concerning funeral arrangements.
- (e) Assigning a deputy to remain at the family home during the viewing and funeral.
- (f) Arranging for transportation of the survivors to and from the funeral home and interment site using department vehicles and drivers.

#### 1061.6.6 MUTUAL AID COORDINATOR

The mutual aid coordinator should work with the Department Liaison and the Funeral Liaison to request and coordinate any assistance from outside law enforcement agencies needed for, but not limited to:

- (a) Traffic control during the deceased member's funeral.
- (b) Area coverage so that as many Merced County Sheriff's Office members can attend funeral services as possible.

The mutual aid coordinator should perform his/her duties in accordance with the Mutual Aid and Outside Agency Assistance Policy.

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

#### 1061.6.7 BENEFITS LIAISON

The Benefits Liaison should provide survivors with information concerning available benefits and assist them in applying for benefits. Responsibilities of the Benefits Liaison include, but are not limited to:

- (a) Confirming the filing of workers' compensation claims and related paperwork (see the Occupational Disease and Work-Related Injury Reporting Policy).
- (b) Researching and assisting survivors with application for federal government survivor benefits, such as those offered through the:
  - 1. Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) Programs.
  - 2. Public Safety Officers' Educational Assistance (PSOEA) Program.
  - 3. Social Security Administration.
  - 4. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- (c) Researching and assisting survivors with application for state and local government survivor benefits.
  - 1. Education benefits (Education Code § 68120)
  - 2. Health benefits (Labor Code § 4856)
  - 3. Worker's compensation death benefit (Labor Code § 4702)
- (d) Researching and assisting survivors with application for other survivor benefits such as:
  - 1. Private foundation survivor benefits programs.
  - 2. Survivor scholarship programs.
- (e) Researching and informing survivors of support programs sponsored by sheriff's associations and other organizations.
- (f) Documenting and informing survivors of inquiries and interest regarding public donations to the survivors.
  - 1. If requested, working with the finance coordinator to assist survivors with establishing a process for the receipt of public donations.
- (g) Providing survivors with a summary of the nature and amount of benefits applied for, including the name of a contact person at each benefit office. Printed copies of the summary and benefit application documentation should be provided to affected survivors.
- (h) Maintaining contact with the survivors and assisting with subsequent benefit questions and processes as needed.

#### 1061.6.8 FINANCE COORDINATOR

The finance coordinator should work with the Sheriff and the Department Liaison to manage financial matters related to the line-of-duty death. The finance coordinator's responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

### *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

- (a) Establishing methods for purchasing and monitoring costs related to the incident.
- (b) Providing information on finance-related issues, such as:
  - 1. Paying survivors' travel costs if authorized.
  - 2. Transportation costs for the deceased.
  - 3. Funeral and memorial costs.
  - 4. Related funding or accounting questions and issues.
- (c) Working with the Benefits Liaison to establish a process for the receipt of public donations to the deceased member's survivors.
- (d) Providing accounting and cost information as needed.

#### **1061.7 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER**

In the event of a line-of-duty death, the department's [PIO] should be the department's contact point for the media. As such, the [PIO] should coordinate with the Department Liaison to:

- (a) Collect and maintain the most current incident information and determine what information should be released.
- (b) Ensure that department members are instructed to direct any media inquiries to the [PIO].
- (c) Prepare necessary press releases.
  - 1. Ensure coordination with other entities having media roles (e.g., outside agencies involved in the investigation or incident).
  - 2. Ensure that important public information is disseminated, such as information on how the public can show support for the Department and deceased member's survivors.
- (d) Arrange for community and media briefings by the Sheriff or the authorized designee as appropriate.
- (e) Respond, or coordinate the response, to media inquiries.
- (f) If requested, assist the member's survivors with media inquiries.
  - 1. Brief the survivors on handling sensitive issues such as the types of questions that reasonably could jeopardize future legal proceedings.
- (g) Release information regarding memorial services and funeral arrangements to department members, other agencies and the media as appropriate.
- (h) If desired by the survivors, arrange for the recording of memorial and funeral services via photos and/or video.

The identity of deceased members should be withheld until the member's survivors have been notified. If the media has obtained identifying information for the deceased member prior to survivor notification, the [PIO] should request that the media withhold the information from release until proper notification can be made to survivors. The [PIO] should ensure that media are notified when survivor notifications have been made.

## *Line-of-Duty Deaths*

---

### **1061.8 DEPARTMENT CHAPLAIN**

The Department chaplain may serve a significant role in line-of-duty deaths. His/her duties may include, but are not limited to:

- Assisting with survivor notifications and assisting the survivors with counseling, emotional support or other matters, as appropriate.
- Assisting liaisons and coordinators with their assignments, as appropriate.
- Assisting department members with counseling or emotional support, as requested and appropriate.

Further information on the potential roles and responsibilities of the chaplain is in the Chaplains Policy.

### **1061.9 INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT**

The Sheriff shall ensure that line-of-duty deaths are investigated thoroughly and may choose to use the investigation process outlined in the Officer-Involved Shootings and Deaths Policy.

Investigators from other agencies may be assigned to work on any criminal investigation related to line-of-duty deaths. Partners, close friends or personnel who worked closely with the deceased member should not have any investigative responsibilities because such relationships may impair the objectivity required for an impartial investigation of the incident.

Involved department members should be kept informed of the progress of the investigations and provide investigators with any information that may be pertinent to the investigations.

### **1061.10 LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH OF A LAW ENFORCEMENT ANIMAL**

The Sheriff may authorize appropriate memorial and funeral services for law enforcement animals killed in the line of duty.

### **1061.11 NON-LINE-OF-DUTY DEATH**

The Sheriff may authorize certain support services for the death of a member not occurring in the line of duty.

# Merced County SO Policy Manual

Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

## INDEX / TOPICS

..... 28

### A

ABBREVIATIONS . . . . .	15
ACCOUNTABILITY TO SUPERVISOR . . . . .	21
ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATION . . . . .	73
ADMINISTRATIVE INVESTIGATIONS	
OIS . . . . .	73, 73, 73
OIS . . . . .	73, 73
ADMINISTRATIVE LEAVE . . . . .	604
ADULT ABUSE . . . . .	142
Investigations. . . . .	457
AIRCRAFT . . . . .	346
Accidents. . . . .	346
Ambulance. . . . .	430
ALCOHOL	
Firearms. . . . .	84
Vehicle use. . . . .	511
ALCOHOL . . . . .	585
ALCOHOL USE . . . . .	585
ALCOHOL, INTOXICANTS . . . . .	187
AMMUNITION	
Gun violence restraining order surrenders. . . . .	276
AMMUNITION . . . . .	80
ANIMALS	
Canines. . . . .	110
Euthanize. . . . .	86
Injured. . . . .	86
Line-of-duty deaths. . . . .	687
ANTI-REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS CRIMES . . . . .	226
APPOINTMENTS	
Chaplain coordinator. . . . .	246
Forfeiture reviewer. . . . .	469
Line-of-duty death liaisons and coordinators . . . . .	680
Operations director . . . . .	487, 491
Petty cash fund manager. . . . .	515
PIO. . . . .	197
UAS Coordinator. . . . .	484
ARRESTS	
Authority. . . . .	9
First amendment assemblies . . . . .	419, 421
Log. . . . .	198
Seat belts. . . . .	608
Sick or injured person. . . . .	429
Use of force. . . . .	47
ASSET FORFEITURE . . . . .	466
AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING	
Body-worn cameras. . . . .	377
Custodial interrogation. . . . .	456
OIS. . . . .	74

### AUDITS

Case dispositions. . . . .	465
Informant files. . . . .	476
Informant funds. . . . .	479
Petty cash. . . . .	515
Public safety video surveillance. . . . .	254
AUTHORITY . . . . .	9
Policy manual. . . . .	15
AUTHORITY, ETHICS . . . . .	183
AUTOMATED EXTERNAL DEFIBRILLATORS (AED) . . . . .	431
AUTOMATED LICENSE PLATE READERS (ALPR) . . . . .	402
AUXILIARY RESTRAINTS . . . . .	58

### B

BACKGROUNDEVER . . . . .	568
BADGE	
Mourning Badge. . . . .	649
BARRICADED INCIDENTS . . . . .	309
BARRICADED SUSPECTS . . . . .	309
BIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE	
Sexual assault. . . . .	463
BIOLOGICAL SAMPLES	
Hazards . . . . .	347, 676
Missing persons. . . . .	162
BODY ARMOR	
Suspects. . . . .	82
BODY ARMOR . . . . .	610
BOMBS . . . . .	314
Aircraft accidents. . . . .	347
MDT/MDC. . . . .	376
Portable audio/video recorders. . . . .	380

### C

CANINE	
Handler Compensation. . . . .	115
Handler Responsibilities. . . . .	113
Selection. . . . .	113
Training. . . . .	116
CANINE USE REPORTS . . . . .	111
CANINES . . . . .	110
Pursuits. . . . .	395
CASH	
Audit. . . . .	479
Informants. . . . .	478
CASH HANDLING, SECURITY AND MANAGEMENT . . . . .	515
CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT . . . . .	619
CHAPLAINS . . . . .	245
Line-of-duty deaths. . . . .	687
CHIEF EXECUTIVE . . . . .	12
CHILD ABUSE . . . . .	154

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

CHILDREN	
Transporting. . . . .	609
CITATIONS . . . . .	436
CITE & RELEASE . . . . .	325
CIVIL	
Liability response. . . . .	74
Subpoenas. . . . .	203
CIVIL DISPUTES . . . . .	423
CIVILIAN/NONSWORN	
Crisis intervention incidents. . . . .	412
CODE-3 . . . . .	104
COMMAND PROTOCOL . . . . .	20
COMMAND STAFF	
Line-of-duty deaths. . . . .	677
COMMUNICABLE DISEASE	
Health orders. . . . .	289
COMMUNICABLE DISEASES	
First responders. . . . .	428
Illness and injury prevention. . . . .	672
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER	
Foot pursuits. . . . .	398
Mandatory sharing. . . . .	211
Vehicle pursuits. . . . .	97
COMMUNICATIONS CENTER	
Crisis intervention incidents. . . . .	411
COMMUNICATIONS WITH HEARING	
IMPAIRED OR DISABLED . . . . .	236
COMPUTERS	
Digital evidence. . . . .	458
CONDUCT . . . . .	181
Standards of conduct. . . . .	185
CONFIDENTIALITY	
ALPR. . . . .	404
Chaplains. . . . .	248
Communications center. . . . .	528
Radio broadcasts. . . . .	375
Surreptitious recording. . . . .	380
CONTACTS AND TEMPORARY DETENTIONS	
Warrant service. . . . .	489
CONTROL DEVICES	
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	420
Training. . . . .	336
CONTROL DEVICES . . . . .	61
CONTROL DEVICES . . . . .	61
CORRESPONDENCE . . . . .	28
COURT APPEARANCES . . . . .	200
COURT ORDERS	
Gun violence restraining order surrenders. . . . .	276
Subpoenas. . . . .	200
Surreptitious recording. . . . .	380
COURT ORDERS, CIVIL DISPUTES . . . . .	424
COURTROOM ATTIRE . . . . .	204

CRIME SCENE . . . . .	288
CRIME SCENE AND DISASTER INTEGRITY	
. . . . .	288
CRISIS INTERVENTION INCIDENTS . . . . .	409
CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM . . . . .	291
CUSTODIAL INTERROGATIONS . . . . .	456
CUSTODIAN OF RECORDS . . . . .	556

## D

DAMAGE BY COUNTY PERSONNEL . . . . .	194
DEATH	
Chaplains. . . . .	247
Native American Graves (NAGPRA). . . . .	277
DEATH INVESTIGATION . . . . .	217
DEATH NOTIFICATION . . . . .	218
DEBRIEFING	
OIS. . . . .	75
Tactical. . . . .	75
Warrant service. . . . .	489
DECONFLICTION . . . . .	493
DEFECTIVE VEHICLES . . . . .	506
DEPARTMENT OWNED PROPERTY . . . . .	498
DEPARTMENT PROPERTY	
Loss Or Damage. . . . .	499
DEPARTMENTAL DIRECTIVE . . . . .	22
DEPUTY IDENTIFICATION . . . . .	523
DISABLED	
Motorist. . . . .	451
DISASTER PLAN . . . . .	23
DISASTER SCENE . . . . .	288
DISCIPLINE . . . . .	182
DISCLAIMER . . . . .	14
DISCLOSING INFORMATION . . . . .	665
DISCRIMINATION, CONDUCT . . . . .	183
DISTRIBUTION . . . . .	15
DIVISION . . . . .	20
DOG BITES . . . . .	111
DOG INJURIES . . . . .	112
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE	
Reporting of Employee Convictions. . . . .	583
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE . . . . .	120
DRIVING	
MDT/MDC. . . . .	374
DRIVING, SAFETY SAFETY, CONDUCT	
FIREARMS, CONDUCT . . . . .	186
DRUG USE . . . . .	585
DUTY TO INTERCEDE . . . . .	46

## E

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

ELECTRO-MUSCULAR DISRUPTION TECHNOLOGY DEVICE . . . . .	66
ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES . . . . .	597
ELECTRONIC MAIL . . . . .	26
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN . . . . .	23
EMPLOYEE COMMENDATIONS . . . . .	620
EPINEPHRINE AUTO-INJECTORS . . . . .	432
EVALUATION . . . . .	572
EVIDENCE	
Digital. . . . .	458
NAGPRA. . . . .	277
Public Safety Video Surveillance. . . . .	253
Seizing recordings. . . . .	415
EVIDENCE, BOMBS . . . . .	318
EXPLOSIONS . . . . .	317
EXPOSURE CONTROL	
Reviews. . . . .	672
EXPOSURE(S) . . . . .	307
EYEWITNESS IDENTIFICATION . . . . .	480

## F

FIELD CITATIONS . . . . .	325
FIELD DETAINEES . . . . .	355
FIELD INTERVIEW . . . . .	355
FIELD PHOTOGRAPHS . . . . .	355
FIELD TRAINING OFFICER . . . . .	350
FIREARM SERIAL NUMBERS . . . . .	543
FIREARMS	
Destruction of animals. . . . .	565
Gun violence restraining orders. . . . .	274
Mental illness commitments. . . . .	323
Removal for vehicle maintenance. . . . .	506
Retiree. . . . .	39
FIREARMS	
Qualifications. . . . .	83
FIRST AMENDMENT ASSEMBLIES . . . . .	417
FITNESS FOR DUTY . . . . .	623
FOREIGN DIPLOMATIC AND CONSULAR REPRESENTATIVES . . . . .	330
FORMS	
Eyewitness identification. . . . .	480
Missing person medical release. . . . .	162
Missing person school notification. . . . .	162
Missing persons. . . . .	162

## G

GANGS, EMPLOYEE AFFILIATION . . . . .	183
GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE . . . . .	579
GROOMING STANDARDS . . . . .	640

GUN VIOLENCE RESTRAINING ORDERS	274
---------------------------------	-----

## H

HANDCUFFING . . . . .	57
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL . . . . .	306
HAZARDOUS MATERIAL (HAZMAT) RESPONSE	
Aircraft accidents. . . . .	347
HAZARDS . . . . .	674
HEARING IMPAIRED . . . . .	236
HIGH-VISIBILITY VESTS . . . . .	436
HOMELESS . . . . .	406
HOSTAGES . . . . .	309

## I

IDENTITY THEFT . . . . .	220
ILLNESS AND INJURY PREVENTION . . . . .	672
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY USE	
TECHNOLOGY USE . . . . .	188
INSPECTIONS	
Illness and injury prevention . . . . .	672, 675
Personal protective equipment. . . . .	675
Vehicles. . . . .	675
INTERNAL AFFAIRS	
Personnel records. . . . .	613
INTERNET ACTIVITY . . . . .	665
INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION . . . . .	455

## J

JAIL RELEASE . . . . .	325
JURISDICTION	
Aircraft accidents. . . . .	347
Authority. . . . .	9
JURISDICTIONS	
Vehicle pursuits. . . . .	97
JUVENILE INFORMANTS . . . . .	474
JUVENILES	
Citations. . . . .	327
Use as Informants. . . . .	474

## L

LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITY . . . . .	9
LEG IRONS . . . . .	58
LEG RESTRAINT . . . . .	56

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

LEG RESTRAINTS . . . . .	58
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY	
Communications center. . . . .	526
Eyewitness identification. . . . .	480
LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY . . . . .	228
LINE-OF-DUTY DEATHS . . . . .	677

## M

MANDATORY APPEARANCE . . . . .	200
MANUALS . . . . .	23
MEAL PERIODS AND BREAKS . . . . .	626
MEDIA	
Aircraft accidents. . . . .	348
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	421
Line-of-duty deaths. . . . .	686
OIS. . . . .	75
Operations plans. . . . .	495
Warrant service. . . . .	490
MEDICAL	
Adult involuntary detention. . . . .	146
Aircraft accidents. . . . .	346
Canine bites. . . . .	115
Examinations – Adult abuse. . . . .	147
Illness and injury prevention. . . . .	672
Leave act (FMLA). . . . .	589
Opioid overdoses. . . . .	431
Personnel records. . . . .	614
Releases. . . . .	430
Treatment for occupational disease or work-related injury. . . . .	638
MENTAL ILLNESS	
Restrains. . . . .	319
MENTAL ILLNESS COMMITMENTS . . . . .	319
MINIMUM STAFFING . . . . .	29
MISSING PERSONS . . . . .	162
MOBILE AUDIO VIDEO . . . . .	367
MOBILE AUDIO/VIDEO (MAV)	
OIS. . . . .	74
MOBILE DIGITAL TERMINAL USE . . . . .	374
MODIFIED-DUTY ASSIGNMENTS . . . . .	659
Pregnancy. . . . .	662
MUTUAL AID	
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	420
Interstate peace officer powers. . . . .	11
Warrant service. . . . .	490

## N

NARCOTIC-DETECTION DOGS	
Use of. . . . .	111

NATIVE AMERICAN GRAVES (NAGPRA)	277
NONSWORN	
Vehicles. . . . .	511
NOTIFICATIONS	
Adult abuse. . . . .	143
Aircraft accidents. . . . .	347
Cash. . . . .	516
Line-of-duty deaths. . . . .	678
NAGPRA. . . . .	277
Sick leave. . . . .	589
NOTIFICATIONS . . . . .	71

## O

OATH OF OFFICE . . . . .	13
OC SPRAY . . . . .	61
OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE AND WORK-RELATED INJURY REPORTING . . . . .	638
OFFICER SAFETY	
Communications center . . . . .	526, 528
Foot pursuits. . . . .	395
LEOSA. . . . .	39
Occupational hazards. . . . .	674
Seat belts. . . . .	608
Warrant service. . . . .	487
OPERATIONS PLANNING AND DECONFLICTION . . . . .	491
ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE . . . . .	20
OUTSIDE AGENCY ASSISTANCE . . . . .	210
OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT . . . . .	632
Change in Status. . . . .	635
Obtaining Approval. . . . .	632
Prohibited Outside Employment. . . . .	633
Security Employment. . . . .	634
OVERTIME	
Court. . . . .	204
OVERTIME PAYMENT . . . . .	630

## P

PAT-DOWN SEARCH . . . . .	355
PEPPER PROJECTILES . . . . .	63
PERSONAL APPEARANCE . . . . .	640
PERSONAL PROPERTY . . . . .	498
Loss Or Damage. . . . .	499
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT . . . . .	517
PERSONNEL COMPLAINTS	
Bias-based policing. . . . .	285
Portable audio/video review. . . . .	381
PERSONNEL RECORDS . . . . .	612
PHOTOGRAPHS	

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

Aircraft accidents. . . . .	348
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	418
Photo lineups. . . . .	482
PIO . . . . .	197
POLICY MANUAL . . . . .	14
POLITICAL ACTIVITY . . . . .	666
POLITICAL ENDORSEMENTS . . . . .	666
PRESS INFORMATION OFFICER . . . . .	197
PRIVACY EXPECTATION . . . . .	667
PRIVACY EXPECTATIONS	
Audio/video recordings. . . . .	379
MDT/MDC. . . . .	374
Unmanned aerial system. . . . .	484
PRIVACY EXPECTATIONS, TECHNOLOGY	
USE . . . . .	188
PRIVATE PERSONS ARRESTS . . . . .	222
PROHIBITED SPEECH . . . . .	665
PROMOTIONAL PROCESS . . . . .	576
PROPERTY PROCEDURES	
Packaging Of Property. . . . .	533
Property Booking. . . . .	530
Property Handling. . . . .	530
PROTECTED INFORMATION	
Communications center. . . . .	528
PROTECTED INFORMATION, UNAUTHORIZED	
RELEASE BADGES, PATCHES AND	
IDENTIFICATION, CONDUCT	
CONFIDENTIALITY, CONDUCT . . . . .	184
PROTECTIVE CUSTODY	
Dependent adults. . . . .	146
PUBLIC RECORDING OF LAW ENFORCEMENT	
ACTIVITY . . . . .	414
PUBLIC SAFETY VIDEO SURVEILLANCE	251
PURSUIT INTERVENTION . . . . .	99
PURSUIT UNITS . . . . .	93
PURSUIITS	
Foot. . . . .	395

## R

RAPE KIT . . . . .	463
RAPID RESPONSE AND DEPLOYMENT . . . . .	334
REASONABLE SUSPICION . . . . .	355
RECORDS BUREAU	
Gun violence restraining orders. . . . .	276
Suspicious activity reports. . . . .	427
RECORDS RELEASE	
ALPR. . . . .	404
Audio/video recordings. . . . .	383
Child deaths. . . . .	160
Personnel records. . . . .	615
Public safety video surveillance. . . . .	253

RECORDS REQUESTS	
Personnel records. . . . .	614
RECORDS RETENTION	
Audio/video recordings. . . . .	382
Epinephrine auto-injectors. . . . .	432
Illness and injury prevention. . . . .	676
Oath of office. . . . .	13
Personal protective equipment. . . . .	520
Personnel records. . . . .	617
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION . . . . .	567
REFLECTORIZED VESTS . . . . .	436
RELIGION	
NAGPRA. . . . .	277
REPORT CORRECTIONS . . . . .	196
REPORT PREPARATION . . . . .	192
RESERVE	
Coordinator. . . . .	206
RESERVE DEPUTIES	
Firearms Requirements. . . . .	208
Training. . . . .	207
RESPIRATORY PROTECTION . . . . .	518
RESPONSE TO CALLS . . . . .	104
RESTRAINTS . . . . .	56
REVIEWS	
Complaints of racial- or bias-based profiling	286
Crisis intervention incidents. . . . .	413
Exposures. . . . .	672
Eyewitness identification process - annual.	480
IIPP. . . . .	673
Illness and injury prevention. . . . .	672
Mobile audio/video. . . . .	285
Policy manual. . . . .	17
Portable audio/video. . . . .	381
Racial- and bias-based profiling - annual.	286
UAS. . . . .	484
Use of force - annual. . . . .	53
RIDE-ALONG	
Eligibility. . . . .	301
RISK ASSESSMENT . . . . .	491
ROLL CALL TRAINING . . . . .	287

## S

SAFETY	
Communications center. . . . .	523
Inspections (occupations). . . . .	675
Media. . . . .	197
Occupational. . . . .	672
Personal protective equipment. . . . .	517
SAFETY EQUIPMENT	
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	419
Seat belts. . . . .	608

# Merced County Sheriff's Office

## Merced County Sheriff Policy Manual

SCHOOL EMPLOYEE REPORTING . . .	244
SEARCH & SEIZURE . . . . .	129
SEARCH WARRANTS . . . . .	487
SEARCHES	
Crime scene. . . . .	289
Gun violence restraining orders. . . . .	275
SEARCHING	
Dead Bodies. . . . .	218
SEAT BELTS . . . . .	608
SECURITY	
Personnel records. . . . .	614
SECURITY EMPLOYMENT . . . . .	634
SELECTION . . . . .	113
SHERIFF CANDIDATE . . . . .	12
SICK LEAVE . . . . .	589
SMOKING AND TOBACCO USE . . . . .	597
SOCIAL MEDIA . . . . .	271
Backgrounds. . . . .	569
SOCIAL NETWORKING . . . . .	664
SPIT HOOD . . . . .	58
SPIT MASK . . . . .	58
STAFF . . . . .	14
STAFFING LEVELS . . . . .	29
STANDARDS OF CONDUCT . . . . .	181
STANDBY . . . . .	200
SUBPOENAS	
Acceptance. . . . .	201
SUBPOENAS AND COURT APPEARANCES	200
SUCCESSION OF COMMAND . . . . .	20
SUPERVISION DEPLOYMENTS . . . . .	29
SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORTING . . . . .	426
SWAT . . . . .	291

## T

TASER . . . . .	66
TEAR GAS . . . . .	62
TERMINATE A PURSUIT . . . . .	92
TIME CARD . . . . .	629
TIME CARDS . . . . .	629
TRAFFIC FUNCTION AND RESPONSIBILITY	
. . . . .	435
TRAFFIC OFFICER/DEPUTY . . . . .	435
TRAINING	
Adult abuse. . . . .	148
AED. . . . .	431
Dispatcher. . . . .	529
Epinephrine auto-injector. . . . .	433
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	422
Hazardous materials. . . . .	676
Mental illness commitments. . . . .	324
Missing persons. . . . .	167

Occupational safety. . . . .	676
Operation planning and deconfliction. . . . .	496
Opioid medication. . . . .	432
Personal protective equipment. . . . .	521
Personnel records. . . . .	613
Public safety video surveillance. . . . .	254
Racial- or bias-based profiling. . . . .	286
Rapid response and deployment. . . . .	336
Shared equipment and supplies. . . . .	211
Social media. . . . .	273
UAS. . . . .	485
Warrant service. . . . .	490
TRAINING PLAN . . . . .	24
TRAINING POLICY . . . . .	24
TRANSFER PROCESS . . . . .	576
TRANSPORT BELTS . . . . .	58

## U

UNIFORM REGULATIONS . . . . .	643
UNIFORMS	
Chaplains. . . . .	246
Courtroom attire. . . . .	204
UNITY OF COMMAND . . . . .	21
UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY . . . . .	420
UNMANNED AERIAL SYSTEM . . . . .	484
USE OF FORCE . . . . .	46
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	420
USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA . . . . .	271

## V

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE . . . . .	506
VEHICLE PURSUITS . . . . .	91
VEHICLES	
Impound hearings. . . . .	446
VIDEO RECORDINGS	
First amendment assemblies. . . . .	418

## W

WARNINGS	
Shots. . . . .	86
WARRANT SERVICE . . . . .	487
WASHING OF VEHICLES . . . . .	507
WATER RESCUE AND RECOVERY TEAM	295